

THE LIFE BEYOND

R. E. HUTTON



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THE LIFE BEYOND

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THE LIFE BEYOND

THOUGHTS ON
THE INTERMEDIATE STATE
AND
THE SOUL IN THE UNSEEN WORLD

By

R. E. HUTTON

Chaplain of St. Margaret's, East Grinstead

LONDON: ROBERT SCOTT
ROXBURGHE HOUSE
PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
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INTRODUCTION

THE shadow of death falls so frequently across the pathway of life that the thought of "the things that are to come hereafter" is one from which there is no escape.

At the present time, when Europe is deluged with the blood of her young men, and the almost world-wide war is hurrying millions into the "life of the world to come," the desire to learn what the Church as a whole has to tell us of that world and our duty towards those who have passed into it, is surely one that is wholly legitimate?

It is increasingly felt that the neglect of definite teaching upon the doctrine of "the communion of saints" deprives the living who mourn the loss of those they have loved of a consolation to which they are entitled, and the dead of help that is their due.

At the alteration of religion in the sixteenth century the Church of England fell under the bale-

ful influence of German and Swiss Reformers, and was deprived by their interference of much of her Catholic heritage, and torn from that unity with the rest of the Western Church wherein lay her safety. The old prayers in which our forefathers had made intercession for the dead were ruthlessly removed from the Service Books. The one or two vaguely worded sentences in the Book of Common Prayer which refer to those who have departed this life, have quite failed to teach people that it is their duty to pray for the dead. Nevertheless, belief in the efficacy of prayer for the dead is everywhere reviving, and that not merely in the Church of England, but even in the Nonconformist bodies.

Writing from France shortly after his return to the Church, the Rev. R. J. Campbell says :—

“ Yesterday was what the French call ‘ The Day of the Dead.’

“ Near where I am staying is a fairly large church, and in and out of this, all day long, the stream of worshippers has been pouring without intermission. They are still doing it to-day, though in a somewhat less degree, and they will keep on doing it while the war lasts. Yesterday was All Souls’ Day, to give it its ecclesiastical designation in England, as elsewhere throughout Christendom. Here, especially in view of the war, it seems to mean something very much more real and comforting than it does to most of us at home.

“ What a yawning gulf ordinary Protestantism makes between the living and the dead to be sure!—or, rather,

between those still in the flesh and those who have done with it. Not so the devout Catholic, simple-minded, earnest, and sincere.

“ To him, to her, the beloved who has passed through the portals of death has not passed beyond the reach of loving care and tender sympathy. The loved one is not less but more responsive to the loyal, helpful solicitude of those left behind, and perhaps, for a time, may need it more.

“ I sat in the church for a good while and watched those people come and go. It was an experience never to be forgotten. All were in mourning ; all had lost some one near and dear either on the battlefield or in the ordinary course of nature. I judged, and I think I was not mistaken, that the war was uppermost in their minds, that the grim reaper had gained most of his harvest of late from the battlefield so far as this company was concerned.

“ There were no young men present ; they were all at the front. There were plenty of old men, old soldiers many of them looked, stumping bravely along with military stride and bearing ; old women leaning on sticks ; grey-haired matrons with weeping eyes ; young widows carrying their babies or leading their little children by the hand ; boys in their teens, some of them already in soldier’s garb or what approximated thereto ; girls, troops of them, with subdued and reverent mien.

“ Most were kneeling before the dimly-lighted altar. Some of them, the veterans especially, stood erect, their lips silently moving in devout entreaty to the holy Presence they believed to be there before their eyes. For it should not be forgotten that to these people, in the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is vouchsafed a visual revelation of the actual presence of the Lord Christ Himself. Who shall say they are wrong ?

“ Since the war began, I have realized in French

churches as I never did before the devotional value, the practical helpfulness, of the reservation of the sacrament of the altar. It makes all the difference between a dead building and a place that is a sanctuary indeed, wherein worshippers feel that they are in immediate contact with the supernatural and divine.

“It was impossible to be there without being moved by it. There was a strange unearthly power in the very atmosphere.

“Would any one tell me that the exercise upon which these people were engaged was all in vain, that Heaven neither desired nor heeded it, and that the trust and affection that prompted it were utterly deluded as to the object they sought to achieve ?

“Be it remembered, this, after all, is the faith of the majority of Christendom, the faith that the communion of saints still continues after the shock of death. It has antiquity on its side, and, though greatly abused in pre-Reformation days, satisfies such a natural instinct and is such a solace to the bereaved, that it is a pity Protestants everywhere should not be encouraged to return to it forthwith.”¹

In the following pages I have shown that the departed were prayed for long before the Christian era, and that the practice everywhere prevailed in the Christian Church from the first age down to the present day. According to St. John Chrysostom the “Apostles ordered that remembrance of the dead should be made in the dreadful Mysteries.” In the Book of Common Prayer we are told that Christ “hath instituted and ordained

¹ *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, November 14, 1914.

Holy Mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort."

In order that all our life and our death may be united with the life and death of Christ, the Church has always pleaded for the living and the dead most insistently during the offering of these Holy Mysteries. The sacrificial offering made by our Lord began in eternity when He offered Himself to do the will of God. The offering was brought in time to earth, continued during the thirty years, was consummated on the cross, and then taken up and presented before the altar on high, where it is continually set forth by the presence of Him Who is a Priest for ever. This sacrifice, once offered, is thus shown forth in Heaven, and in the Eucharist is also pleaded upon earth. As St. Thomas Aquinas taught, "This sacrament . . . inasmuch as it is commemorative of our Lord's Passion, which was the true sacrifice . . . is called a sacrifice." It follows, that the Eucharist must be the central act around which is gathered the worship of the Church. By it we pay to God the honour due to His majesty ; we offer Him thanks and praise for His goodness and mercy ; we re-present the propitiation for sin made by His life and by His death, and call it into action. We apply the

virtue of the life and death of the Incarnate Son of God to all who have the adoption of sons, whether they be living here on earth or passed into the life of the world to come. But the Eucharist is also a showing forth of the ideal life of sacrifice to which all are called. This exemplary aspect of the Eucharist is often ignored. It has been well expressed by Mr. Temple in his book, *The Faith and Modern Thought*. Speaking of the institution of the Eucharist he says :—

“ He took bread and said that it was His body ; and He gave thanks for it, He broke it, and He gave it to them and said : ‘ Do this in remembrance of Me.’ He took the bread of which He said it was His body—‘ This is My Body : as I treat this bread, so I treat My Body ’—and He gave it to them ; and said : ‘ Do that, if you want to show you remember Me.’ Do what ? The sign, no doubt. But, far more important, what it signifies. The demand is nothing less than this : that men should take their whole human life, and break it, and give it for the good of others. The quality in which we are to grow is service to the point of absolute and complete sacrifice.” ¹

With reference to this ideal of life, I may quote some words that I wrote sixteen years ago—

“ Sacrifice rightly understood symbolizes human life approaching God in acceptable service. In the Pass-over the whole Hebrew people were taught to look upon themselves as redeemed by sacrifice. They were to learn that life is sacrifice. And we, in the Christian

¹ *Summa Theologica*. Pars. iii. quest. 73, art. 4.

Passover—the Eucharist—are taught the same lesson, for it shows forth the life of the ideal Man, as that of One Who was faithful unto the death. The citizen must not merely work for self, but be prepared to sacrifice self for the common good. The soldier is, perhaps, the most splendid embodiment of the idea of sacrifice ; then follows the physician, the men of science—often martyrs, the priest, and every other honest working man ; among women—the sister of mercy, the good mother, the unselfish nurse, and a host of others. The soldier in time of war seems to step into the front ranks of this multitude, since he goes out to offer his life not for any selfish end, but for his country, and therefore indirectly for God. The Moslem is taught that death on the field of battle is a passport to Paradise ; and from a Christian standpoint there is much to be said for the idea contained in this belief. The soldier or the sailor who dies in battle has perhaps no exalted estimate of the value of the sacrifice which he makes ; but none the less his heroism is linked to the great sacrifice offered by the Captain of our salvation. His response to the call to serve his country is the supreme acceptance of duty, and duty well done is closely allied with religion. Nor does it detract from the value of duty that it is performed more or less as a matter of course. That merely proves that a man's moral life is often on a higher level than he himself is aware of. This may be the meaning of our Lord's words : ' Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me ! ' It is evident from the context that this was an unconscious service of Christ, not an intentional recognition of Our Lord in His poor and suffering members.

" His words are the recognition of actions done from a sense of kindness or duty, inspired, doubtless, by that

‘honest and good heart’ that often unconsciously derives its inspiration from the holy Spirit of God.”¹

We can see, then, why the Church from the first has centred all her worship around the altar where the one great sacrifice is continually pleaded and shown forth. Here she would set forth before God and man the value of faithful service; here invoke “eternal rest and peace” for those whose work on earth is done.

“ Honest toil is holy service,
Faithful work is praise and prayer.
They who tread the path of duty
Follow where My feet have trod ;
They who work without complaining
Do the holy will of God.
Where the many toil together,
There am I among My own ;
Where the tired labourer sleepeth,
There am I with him alone.”

And so with the sacrifice of Christ we gather up in the Eucharist the sacrifice of “ourselves, our souls and bodies,” and all the unselfish service of all men, and place our offering in the hands of God.

“The hands of God!” Yes, let us not forget we are obliged to use human language, and can use none else, all imperfect as it is, to speak of God Who is Spirit, and of all that concerns the

¹ *The Crown of Christ*, vol. ii. 334. 1900 (Rivington).

world of spirits. We see through a glass darkly; but the Church is our teacher, and following her guidance, using her terminology, we shall learn the things which are eternal under the imagery of the things of time.

R. E. H.

St. George's Day, 1916.

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THE LIFE BEYOND

I

WHAT IS MAN ?

THE Psalmist turns from the contemplation of the beauty and magnificence of the inanimate universe to the thought of the apparent littleness and insignificance of man, and asks, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him ? "¹

The heavens seem to him worthily to witness to God as their Maker ; the silent voices of the stars are eloquent in their praise of the power and wisdom of the Creator. But man ? What is man that God should be mindful of him ? The question leads the Psalmist towards the answer. Man, if he has affinity with the animate and inanimate world around him, has also something in common with those pure intelligences who hold a place above man and yet below God. "Thou madest him lower than the angels"—

¹ Ps. viii, 4-6.

lower, that is, than those purely spiritual beings that rank above man because they are not linked with matter, and yet are far below God since they, like man, are creatures, and owe their existence to God, the almighty Creator of all things visible and invisible. But if man is lower than the angels, he is evidently placed above all other forms of created being. God has made him "lower than the angels" only that He may "crown him with glory and worship" upon the earth. "Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of Thy hands, and Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." This excellence of man is implied by the fact that he not only sums up all the lower degrees of life in his own being, but has faculties that are peculiarly his own, and that far transcend those of the brute creation.

By his material body man is united with the inanimate earth on which he walks, by the possession of life he is linked with the vegetable kingdom, and by his sensitive soul he shares in the life of the brutes. But over and above these lower forms of life man has mental endowments of a very high order; his soul is not only sensitive but also rational. Now the question is naturally suggested: Has man by his reason and memory and other mental phenomena something

in common with a form of being that is purely spiritual, and with God, "the Father of spirits?"¹

Whom shall we ask to answer such a question? If we listen to the enlightened reason of mankind, from the dawn of history down to the present day, we shall be told that in man there is something—call it soul, spirit, or what name we will—that lifts him above the lower creation, and places him in relationship with pure intelligences of a spirit world, and with God Who is Spirit.

If we turn to the religious beliefs of mankind we find that, speaking generally, everywhere and at all times all religions have taught that man is composed of a material body and some "in-scrutable entity" that is called the soul or spirit.

In the following pages, however, it is taken for granted that God has made known certain truths by revelation, and that this revelation is embedded in the Holy Scriptures of the Christian Church, and harmonised and systematised in that body of theology that is held in common throughout the Church.

It is not, of course, implied that God has not revealed Himself and made known many truths in other ways. By the order of Nature, by reason, by experience, as well as by the voice of prophets and by the sending of Jesus Christ,

¹ Heb. xii, 9.

God has spoken throughout the ages to those who had ears to hear. God cannot contradict Himself, and therefore the less certain voice of human speculation must be prepared to revise its conclusions if at any time they clash with the teaching of a more sure witness. We turn then to the Bible, and ask if it contains any answer to the question, What exactly are we to understand by the human soul? In reply, we are obliged to acknowledge that the Bible does not give us any strict definition of the soul. Its existence is usually taken for granted, though now and again we come across passages that would, if they stood alone, imply that the soul is merely the principle of bodily life, and therefore entirely dependent on the body. But by far the greater part of the Bible speaks of the soul as the spiritual personality of man. The soul or spirit of man is spoken of as the real self, and it is because man is a personal spirit that the Bible represents him as having dominion over all the lower forms of life. The Bible seems to take for granted that the "Ego"—the real self in man—is a spiritual entity that "informs" the physical organism.

It is not necessary to discuss the teaching of the great pre-Christian philosophers as to the human soul. It is sufficient to recall the fact that it was to Plato and Aristotle that the Chris-

tian psychologists turned when they sought to define the soul. The Schoolmen of the Middle Ages did little more than adapt to Christian revelation what had been concluded by the most learned teachers of Greece and Rome before the coming of Christ. Anyone may see this who studies the *Summa Theologica* of the great Doctor of the Church—St. Thomas Aquinas.

The origin of the soul brings us face to face with the great and insoluble mystery of the origin of life. At one time it was thought that life in its lowest forms might possibly arise out of inanimate matter, but the development of chemistry and the power of the microscope have proved fatal to the theory of spontaneous generation. Dr. Tyndall confessed that, "no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life."¹ Professor Huxley acknowledged that the doctrine of biogenesis—life from life—is "victorious all along the line at the present day."² Science can offer no explanation of the mystery of the origin of life. We must therefore either take up an agnostic position and say that we know nothing about the origin of life, or accept the conclusion of

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, 1878, p. 507.

² *Biology, Encycl. Brit.*

enlightened reason, i.e., that there is a self-existent First Cause, the Lord and Life-giver, from Whom life in all its forms has originated.

It is one of the simplest commonplaces of Christian doctrine that man's likeness to God is chiefly in the soul. It must be so since God is Spirit; we conclude, therefore, that the soul of man is a spirit, and that it resembles God in its spiritual personality—its self-consciousness and its moral freedom; that the soul brings life to the body, as God brings life to all creation; that the soul sees, hears, and remembers things long past, while God knows all things, past, present, and to come; that the soul has free-will and affections which enable it to choose and to reject, to love and to hate, while God is almighty, and has made known that He is love.

It is, of course, true that man falls infinitely short of the Divine perfection of which he is the image. The spirit of man can only do imperfectly and in absolute dependence on God what God does perfectly and of Himself.

The question, whether or no the soul is immortal and thus has another point of likeness to the Eternal, is one that cannot be entirely settled by an appeal to the letter of Holy Scripture. We shall have something to say on the subject later.

In Holy Scripture the immaterial part of man

is sometimes called the soul and sometimes the spirit. Thus our Lord said : “ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,”¹ and on the cross He cried, “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.”² The Greek word for soul is used in the Bible in various senses. Often it stands for the whole immaterial part of man, as in the Book of Revelation, where we read of “ the souls (*ψυχας*) of them that were slain for the word of God.”³ In other passages of Scripture “ soul ” is the word used to signify the life of the body,⁴ whereas the word “ spirit ” is used of the Holy Ghost and of purely spiritual beings such as the angels : when it is used with reference to man it usually conveys the idea that man in his innermost being is spirit, gifted with spiritual gifts and brought into relationship with God.

St. Augustine writes : “ There are three things whereof man consists, spirit, soul, and body ; which again are called two, because often the soul is named together with the spirit, for a certain reasonable part of the same, which the brutes are without, is called the spirit : th which is

¹ St. Matt. x. 28, 29.

² St. Luke xxiii, 46.

³ Rev. vi. 9.

⁴ St. Matt. ii. 20. “ They are dead which sought the young child’s *life* ” (*ψυχήν*).

chief in us is the spirit ; next, the life whereby we are joined to the body is called the soul ; finally, the body itself, since it is visible, is that which in us is last.”¹

St. Cyril of Jerusalem says : “ Know that thou art a twofold man, consisting of body and soul.” Dr. Liddon writes : “ It cannot be concluded that man consists of three essentially distinct elements. . . . Man’s soul is not a third nature, poised between his spirit and his body. . . . It is the outer clothing of the spirit, one with it in essence yet distinct in functions.”²

That is to say, there are not two souls in man, one merely animal and another spiritual. The soul is one but it is looked at in a twofold aspect.

St. Paul occasionally uses language that seems at first sight—but not in reality—to support those who assert that the soul and spirit are quite distinct : “ I pray God your whole spirit ($\pi\nu\epsilon\hat{\nu}\mu\alpha$) and soul ($\psi\nu\chi\eta\jmath$) and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³ The same apostle makes a similar distinction when he speaks of men as either merely natural ($\psi\nu\chi\iota\kappa\acute{\sigma}$), or spiritual ($\pi\nu\epsilon\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\kappa\acute{\sigma}$), or carnal ($\sigma\alpha\tau\kappa\iota\kappa\acute{\sigma}$) : “ The natural man re-

¹ *De fide et symbolo.*

² *Some Elements of Religion.*

³ 1 Thess. v. 23.

ceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.”¹

Spirit is probably the highest faculty in man—that which is peculiar to man, and enables him to become the recipient of the Holy Spirit. The soul may thus be looked upon at one time as the principle of bodily life, and at another as the principle of rational life by which man is made capable of communion with God. The man whose reason is elevated by faith, whose actions are inspired by faith, may well be called spiritual. He whose life, however blameless, is without conscious surrender to God is “the natural man,” while he whose sensual passions are ungoverned by faith or reason is fitly spoken of as “carnal.” The body has no life of its own, but, indwelt by the soul, its life is either carnal, or merely rational, or spiritual. To Aristotle the natural man (*psukikos*) was the highest type known. He opposes the word to *sarkikos*, the sensual man. Nevertheless there has never been an age without its spiritual men, for God the Merciful, the Compassionate, has given light to every man that cometh into the world, and everywhere some have used the light to “walk with God.”

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

All who believe that the soul is not a mere function of the body, believe that it can survive the death of the body, though it is disputed whether the soul is *per se* immortal. A school of Protestant theologians who profess to go by “the Bible and the Bible only,” and who consequently put aside pre-Christian Gentile witness, and the conclusions of the Catholic Church, tell us that “the writers of the New Testament never assert the endless permanence of human consciousness, and assert frequently that the future life of men is contingent on their present action, never assert that their future existence is so contingent. For to them life is much more than existence.”¹ “But it seems inconsistent to profess to follow the teaching of the New Testament and to ignore the office of the Church as set out in those Scriptures. The Church was fashioned by Jesus Christ to be the teacher of the world, and to place a book in its place as the teacher is quite “unscriptural.” The use of the New Testament is to be a witness to the antiquity of the teaching of the Church, so that no novelties may be passed off as having been part of “the Faith once delivered to the saints.”² The old saying is true for those who follow the teaching of Christ and His apostles,

¹ *The Last Things*, Dr. Agar Beet.

² St. Jude 3.

Ecclesia docet, probat Scriptura—the Church teaches, Scripture proves.

The Church undoubtedly has always taught that the soul comes from God and at death returns whence it came—for judgment: “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this (cometh) judgment.”¹ Nor does this belief rest only on the teaching of Christ and His Church. It was in the world centuries before His birth, though associated with some degree of error, such as the doctrine of the soul’s pre-existence. Christ accepted what was true in the teaching of those who preceded Him, and ignored their mistakes. Hence it would be difficult to express the Christian belief better than it was in the fourth century B.C. by Plato, whose witness has well been spoken of as “the testimony of a soul naturally Christian.”

In the *Phædo*, he concludes a long argument with these words:—

“When death assails a man, the mortal part of him, as appears, dies, but the immortal forthwith departs safe and incorruptible, giving place to death. Beyond all else, then, is the soul an immortal and indestructible being; moreover our souls will in reality survive in Hades.”

Cicero was right when he said that, as the

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

belief in the existence of God is natural to us, so do all nations agree that the soul survives the death of the body. In fact the arguments used by Plato, Cicero, and other great teachers of the pre-Christian world, are among the best that reason can furnish in support of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

To sum up, we may assert that this doctrine is not merely a Christian belief, but a doctrine that was reached by the light of reason by some of the most profound thinkers that the world has ever known. This belief was known to the Jews and accepted by some of them, while others taught a doctrine similar to that of conditional immortality. With reference to the teaching of the Old Testament, and indeed to the teaching of the whole Bible, we may bear in mind the words of Dr. Liddon: "The Bible nowhere deals with the natural immortality of the soul as a thesis to be proved. As in the case of the soul's spirituality, the Bible scarcely asserts, but everywhere takes the truth for granted."¹

If we turn to the Church there is no question as to her having taught this doctrine from the first. "The soul is distinct from the body, its companion not its product. It is *I* who cause my body to move; my soul is the source of my

¹ *Some Elements of Religion.*

activity. I am the soul and I have a body: the latter I shall one day relinquish."

It now becomes necessary to ask how far the life of the soul after the death of the body is a continuation of the earthly life. Do we, after the death of the body, develop along the lines we have hitherto been travelling over, or does death entirely change our nature as well as our environment? If the force of analogical argument is to be admitted, it will surely be found that the next life is the outcome of the life we are now living.

"Life is probation, and this earth no goal,
But starting-point of man."¹

¹ *The Pope.* Browning.

II

AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

IF man has no soul in the theological sense of the word—death is the end of man. His body goes to corruption, and with the body his mind also perishes. In a certain sense he may be said to live on in his children: the world may continue for a time to cherish his memory, and his works may still influence society, but the man himself has perished.

On the other hand, if the soul is a spiritual substance, simple or indivisible, the primary principle of life, which exists *per se*, or independently of any union with matter, then, as far as can be seen by the light of reason, there is nothing in the death of the body that would tend to alter the habits and moral condition of the soul. The tendency of intellectual and moral habits is to develop and to become more and more deeply rooted. The ill-tempered man who

never checks himself becomes unbearably disagreeable; his natural irritability develops into habitual anger and even violence. The intemperate man becomes more and more a prey to his passions, and gradually sinks down into pitiable degradation. The slothful, the proud, the unmerciful, the ungrateful, the mean and the selfish, are all tending towards a moral state that becomes their fixed character. An impulse continually yielded to becomes a habit, and habits are not usually altered in a moment. It is true that the choice of another line of conduct is always potentially within reach, but experience teaches how seldom it is that a long-continued habit is speedily eradicated. Can we reasonably suppose that death can mechanically, as it were, alter the whole drift of the soul's life? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that what a man was before death, that he is immediately afterwards, and that the future life is the continuation of the soul's existence under new conditions? The same, of course, holds good as to those who during life have tended towards righteousness, or rather have not persistently chosen unrighteousness. They will also be the same after death as before.¹

This is but one aspect of death. There is

¹ Rev. xxii. 11.

another which opens a more hopeful prospect. If the environment of the soul after death were the same as during life the argument against death affecting the soul would be very strong. But what is the case ? For the first time in its experience the soul, freed from the body, is face to face with the realities of the unseen world. Doubts as to the reality of a conscious hereafter, the absorbing interests of life that have perhaps hitherto almost hidden God from the soul, are now swept away for ever, and the dim faith that has hitherto flickered in the soul suddenly leaps up into the fullest knowledge. In the clear light of the other world comes the realisation of St. Paul's words, "Then shall I know even as I am known."

Who can deny that in the atmosphere of this new world the soul may not instantly see its own imperfection and turn towards God with a strong act of the will, renouncing evil and choosing good, now that, for the first time, good and evil are seen in their true light ? It may be objected that the Church has not found any clear teaching in Holy Scripture which supports this hopeful view. We shall consider the teaching of Holy Scripture later ; but we may say at once that there are saints and great theologians who hold that the disembodied soul " has a greater freedom of intelli-

gence (than it had on earth), since the weight and care of the body is a clog upon the clearness of its intelligence,”¹ and that “the souls after death are cleansed from the stain of sin by turning with fervent love to God and by detestation of those offences which marred, though they did not entirely destroy, their union with Him.”²

St. Thomas Aquinas and Suarez, for instance, hold that “this act of fervent love and perfect sorrow is made in the first instant of the soul’s separation from the body, and suffices of itself to remove all stain of sin.”³

The question arises, Is there any ground in Holy Scripture for supposing that the soul may be corrected and improved by its entry into the life of the world to come? There is very little explicit teaching in the Bible about the state of the soul between the death of the body and the final judgment. In one of the parables,³ however, we have a picture given to us by our Lord that certainly does seem to teach that some such improvement is possible.

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus we are distinctly given to understand that the rich man’s

¹ *Summa Theologica*, St. Thos. Aquinas, lxxxix. 2, 3.

² *A Catholic Dictionary*, Addis & Arnold, seventh ed., 1905. “Purgatory” (p. 766).

³ St. Luke xvi. 19.

sin had been his selfishness. He “fared sumptuously every day,” and neglected the duty—better understood in the East than in our modern life in the West—of caring for his neighbour, though Lazarus “was laid at his gate,” and the duty from an Eastern point of view quite obvious. Now, no sooner has the rich man died and passed into Hades than we notice a change manifesting itself in his character. Suffering has brought home to him its salutary lesson. He is now unselfishly anxious for the welfare of his brethren still on earth. There is no proof in the language of the parable that Dives was hopelessly and for ever lost. The word “Hell” in our Authorized Version has misled many. The Revised Version gives the accurate translation: “And in *Hades* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.”

Hades is the whole realm of the dead who are not in Heaven. It includes the place of the finally reprobate (Gehenna); but it also included the place of the righteous, (Paradise); so that both the rich man and Lazarus were in Hades; but we are told explicitly that Lazarus was in the part of Hades where the souls of the righteous were in happiness. Now, as we shall see later, the Jews were familiar with the idea of educational suffering in Hades, and thus the imagery of the parable would be understood by those who

heard it to teach the truth that the conquest of evil can only be through pain, and that usually God mercifully ordains that penal suffering shall not only be a punishment, but also a remedy, a correction: “He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”¹

It may be said that parables must not be unduly pressed in all their details, and that we cannot safely deduce doctrine from the imagery of such stories. The fact, however, that the Church has very generally allowed, and even encouraged, the belief that in the new light of the new life the soul may turn from what it now recognises to be opposed to its own essential good, and destructive of its happiness, and eagerly desire to attain perfection, is just the witness needful to justify the interpretation that has been suggested as to the purpose of the punishment of the rich man in this parable.

The parable furnishes a scriptural basis for a hope that has always found a place in all religions, that hereafter many may learn the lessons they to some extent failed to learn here on earth. They may be saved “yet so as by fire.”

A further question now suggests itself: Does the time of probation end with this life, or does it extend beyond the grave? In trying to find

¹ Heb. xii. 6.

the answer we must be clear as to what we mean by "probation." If by probation is meant the formation of character, then, as we gather from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the time of probation may be said to extend into the life after death. If we take the word in a more restricted sense, and carefully analyse the teaching of the Church, we shall conclude that probation ends at death, because by death the human organism we call "man" ceases to exist. The soul apart from the body is not "man," for man is a composite of body and soul. It seems then quite reasonable that probation should end when the complete man comes to an end by the separation of the soul from the body. But the body is not the "ego," for, as we have seen, the *ego* is the soul. The soul has its essential state determined by the life it led in the body. It is immortal, and so its life endures after the death of the body; and we have also seen that the soul over and above its essential life has a spiritual fellowship with God which may be developed during its life in the body, or may be forfeited.

If at the moment of death the likeness of the soul to God (which theologians call the "state of grace") is not only imperfect, but absolutely obliterated, then, and only then, can the soul be said to be "lost." None but God can know to

whom this loss happens. The Church merely teaches that if a soul departs this life in a state of spiritual death, we have no revelation that it can regain what it has lost. It is not that God condemns such a soul and refuses to pardon it. He merely, to use human language, accepts what is an accomplished fact. To take an example, the vitality of the body may be seriously impaired by sickness or accident, but as long as life remains there is the possibility of restoration to health. When life is extinct all hope of recovery is gone.

So it may be with the soul. Sin may weaken its spiritual life and bring it near to death, but as long as the spiritual life is not extinct there is hope. It is said of God, “The smoking flax shall He not quench ;”¹ and therefore if any soul is condemned, the condemnation is not an arbitrary sentence, but a judicial statement upon an already accomplished fact. The physician does not condemn to death when he pronounces that life is extinct ; he states a fact which he cannot alter. We must, however, never forget that the spiritual life of the soul cannot be lost by want of knowledge in regard to that life, or by thoughtlessness, or by lack of opportunity to develop it. These things may impair the life of the soul :

¹ Isa. xlii. 3.

they cannot destroy it.¹ Only a conscious, determined and wilful rejection of good, and a choice of what is known to be evil, can destroy the spiritual life. Many do wrong actions simply without a thought of God, they are influenced by passion, by caprice, and by a pursuit of pleasure. It may be that they have never come under the influence of real religion, and for that very reason have not knowingly refused the good and chosen the evil.

It was for the neglect of an obvious duty, not for neglect of religion as such, that Dives is punished in the parable. It is quite plain from another parable that acts of kindness are the manifestation of that "honest and good heart" that is accepted by God, and that they may "cover the multitude of sins." It was for such deeds, done without conscious recognition of God, that our Lord speaks in His teaching as to the judgment : "Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee ? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink ? . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."²

¹ A mortal (deadly) sin^y destroys the life of grace. For this the will must, in a serious matter, *knowingly* reject God and choose the evil.

² St. Matt. xxv. 31-46.

When we remember that the soul can only be “lost” by a conscious, deliberate act of the will, refusing what it knows to be good, and following evil out of persistent malice and contempt for what it recognises as the good, we see how large a hope we have for the ultimate salvation of the human race. God is not only the Merciful and the Compassionate, but He is also the Just One, and the Generous, the Loving One, and the Acceptor of repentance.

Are there any in whom every spark of good is extinct? Fortunately, we are not called upon to judge others; but if our judgment would be a merciful one, how much greater will be the mercy of God?

According to the teaching of St. Paul it may be said of the soul that has even one spark of good within it at the moment of death, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”¹

By “the day of Jesus Christ” is usually understood the judgment. Some such hope was known to Plato, centuries before the Christian era. He tells us in the *Phædrus* that, “There is a law that the paths of darkness beneath the earth shall never be trodden by those who have so much as set foot on the heavenward road.”²

¹ Phil. i. 6.

² 256, *Phædrus*.

This is no encouragement to be careless after conscience has spoken, for the hope is only for those who have not persistently chosen evil and refused good ; those to whom conscience has not spoken very plainly.

We may conclude, then, that while it is improbable that the mere act of dying can alter the moral condition of the soul, yet there is reason for the hope that entry into the realities of the other world may intensify the soul's appreciation of the things of the spirit, and that opportunity will be found hereafter to bring to perfection the work which here on earth had merely a beginning. “The Lord hath not forsaken thee. . . . Verily the life to come shall be better for thee than this present life, and thy Lord shall give thee a reward, and thou shalt be satisfied.”¹

¹ *Quran*, sura xciii.

III

AFTER DEATH—THE OLD TESTAMENT AND JEWISH TRADITION

THE canonical books of the Old Testament have little if anything to teach us about a future life. It is somewhat startling to find scarcely any direct mention of a future life, and no mention at all of rewards and punishments after death, in the earlier books of the Bible. The Hebrews no doubt shared with some other Semitic nations certain ideas as to a future life, but no revelation was given to them, and their beliefs were the survivals, in all probability, of ancestor worship. According to this belief the departed were not altogether dead. They were still associated with the lot of their posterity and were able to benefit or injure those still in the flesh. It was therefore desirable to propitiate these shades by the offering of sacrifices.

A man offered sacrifice, as a matter of course,

only to his own ancestors and thus maintained the unity of the family. Such beliefs naturally were found to clash with the higher teaching of the Hebrew legislators and prophets, and we find that necromancy and other [superstitious practices were from time to time discouraged.¹

Two words that frequently occur in the Old Testament are "Heaven" and "Sheol." Of the four Hebrew words translated "Heaven," there is no certainty that any of the words meant more than a mountain or high place; but if we turn to tradition we find that the Jews divided Heaven into three parts—the air, the firmament, and the upper heaven—the abode of God and the angels. But neither in the Old Testament Scriptures nor in tradition is there reference to Heaven being the destined home of the disembodied souls of the righteous, or of man after the resurrection. The thought of a resurrection was indeed more associated with the nation than the individual.

The word used for the unseen world is "Sheol." It means in the Old Testament both the grave and the whole nether world of spirits. The Authorised Version often uses the word "Hell" as the translation of Sheol. This word in its more literal sense is no doubt a fair equivalent

¹ Lev. xix. 31; xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 10, 11; Isa. viii. 19; xix. 3.

for Sheol in both its significations, but in modern use "Hell" is almost always associated with the idea of a place or state of punishment—an idea never connected with Sheol. From the Book of Job we learn that Sheol was thought of as "a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death." The main thought of Sheol is given to us in these words—a place where all the dead are in sombre gloom—a shadowy and empty existence, that can hardly be called life.

When we come to the Psalms and Prophets we find evidence of the dawn of a clearer hope. Such passages as, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me,"¹ "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness,"² and "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol,"³ show that at least some had a belief in a brighter hereafter than that associated with the thought of Sheol. But it is well to remember that any such belief was of the nature of a pious opinion and individual hope, rather than a dogmatic truth. Hence we find even in the Psalms other expressions which appear to deny the survival of the spirit, or at least to negative the idea of any continuity of its faculties. The thought of God was to many in Israel the very stay of the soul throughout

¹ Ps. xxiii. 4.

² Ps. xvii. 15.

³ Ps. xvi. 10.

life ; how unwilling then must the psalmist have been to state his conviction that " in death there is no remembrance of Thee," and the thought of the cessation of the praises of God implied in the question, " In Sheol who shall give Thee thanks ? " ¹ " Shall the dust praise Thee ? shall it declare Thy truth ? " ² or in the positive assertion, " The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." ³

In the Prophets the sad forlorn state of the disembodied spirit is less prominent, and some hope of a final restoration is proclaimed through the resurrection of the body. It is in this connexion that the first note is sounded of a warning that the new life will be preceded by a severe judgment, and followed not only by rewards, but also by suffering in the case of those who have lived wickedly. Thus in Hosea, " I will ransom them from the power of Sheol ; I will redeem them from death : O death, where are thy plagues ? O grave (Sheol) where is thy destruction ? " ⁴

A later prophet is clear in his vision of judgment : " Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness

¹ Ps. vi. 5.

² Ps. xxx. 9.

³ Ps. cxv. 17.

⁴ Hos. xiii. 14 (R.V.).

of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”¹

Besides these actual references to the difference between the condition of the righteous and the wicked in the future life, there are, of course, great first principles of God’s justice clearly set forth in the Old Testament. Among the more important of these principles are the following: that man has free-will and consequently is responsible for the use which he makes of it; that all are judged according to their merit—“The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him”; that repentance is shown by the forsaking of sin and the endeavour to do what conscience directs; that perseverance in well-doing is essential, or, at any rate, that death must find a man walking in the way that is “lawful and right,” if he would “save his soul alive.” In brief, God’s message was, “I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. . . . I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.”²

It is perhaps in the consideration of these vital principles that we may find the best answer to the query why no clearer revelation as to the

¹ Dan. xii. 2, 3.

² Ezek. ix. 20-32.

future life was given to Israel. If such a revelation had been needful in order that men should attain their end, then we may well suppose it would have been given. But from the very first we find the principle laid down that well-doing is the true service of God, and that evil-doing means the rejection of God. No gifts, no external ceremonial worship, could possibly be accepted in place of that obedience of which worship was meant to be the outward expression.

We learn this from the story of Cain and the rejection of his offering. His sacrifice did not represent any self-surrender—it was an acted lie. “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.”¹

We may say, then, that among the Hebrew people, at the close of the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, the expectation of a future resurrection of the body carries with it the belief in the survival of the soul after death. But we have no teaching as to the condition of the soul in this intermediate state.

It is in the eschatology of later Judaism, in the deutero-canonical books, and the apocalyptic literature that we find a great development of doctrine as to the life after death. No doubt this development was largely due to the influence of

¹ Gen. iv. 7.

the Captivity, when the Jews became familiar with the great Babylonian myth-cycles in which the struggle between good and evil was pictured as a conflict between the gods and various supernatural monsters such as dragons and giants. Sheol is now developed so that it may include places for the punishment of evil angels and wicked men. Then we have also other Gentile influence. The deutero-canonical books (which we call "Apocrypha"), mostly written in Greek, date in part from the Captivity, and the remainder from the last three centuries before Christ. About the time when Malachi uttered his prophecy and gave to Jerusalem the last of the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, to Greece was also given the sublime teaching of Socrates, and of Plato. The association of the deutero-canonical books with the Scriptures of the Old Testament only became possible when the students of Alexandria, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, had given to the world the Septuagint Greek version of the canonical books. Hebrew literature had almost ceased, and any attempted additions to the sacred writings were necessarily introduced as supplementary to the Greek rather than to the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint became the effective instrument for the removal of the barrier that existed between the Gentile and the Jew. More-

over Greek settlements were planted throughout Palestine, and even under the very shadow of the Temple in Jerusalem a Greek gymnasium, with its distinctive games, was instituted. The Grecian domination of Palestine—following that of Persia—lasted about one hundred and sixty years, while the Asmonean period continued one hundred and four, and the Herodian only fifty-nine. As regards the teaching of the Jewish Church at the time of the Incarnation, the Synagogue had no system of doctrines regularly elaborated into a creed. The two main dogmas of Judaism were the unity of God, and the claim of their Scriptures to implicit belief and obedience.

“ In its general aspect,” writes Dr. Edersheim, “ Judaism was a vast system of rationalism, which according to the bent of different minds took the direction of traditionalism, of scepticism, or of mysticism. The only settled thing was the letter of the Law, the text of the Commandments. The meaning and application of the latter formed the subject for inquiry. . . . These tendencies appeared in the schools; they were embodied in the rival sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.”

From this fact it is clear that we cannot expect to find any doctrine of a future state universally accepted among the Jews. The rigidly orthodox—the Pharisees—believed in angels and spirits, and looked for a resurrection of the body—a literal resurrection of the natural body with the same

infirmities and diseases to which it had been subject on earth, but which the hand of the Lord would remove ; the sceptical Jews, represented by the Sadducees, denied the existence of angels and spirits, and the doctrine of the resurrection ; on the other hand, the mystical school, represented by the Essenes—who later on became merged in the theological school of the Kabbalah—taught the pre-existence and the transmigration of souls, the existence of angels, and a final restitution of all things, in which Satan and the evil spirits would share.

To make clear the difference of teaching between a deutero-canonical book written in Greek, and influenced by Greek thought, and a purely Hebrew book, it will suffice to quote what we learn in the Book of Wisdom and in Ecclesiasticus as to the soul in the future life.

In the book called the Wisdom of Solomon—written in Greek at Alexandria—we have the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul clearly taught. To this book we owe the sublime thought that “ the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God ” : words hallowed by the cry uttered in the darkness of Calvary, at the climax of the supreme sacrifice, “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit ” : words which have lingered on in the Latin Church, to be repeated in her

Compline Office night by night as she commits herself to the Divine protection—"In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum": words that echo round the bed of death in our own Office when the priest commends the departing soul to God, "as into the hands of a faithful Creator and most merciful Saviour."

The passage in the Book of Wisdom begins with the assertion that "God made not death," nevertheless "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them and found them worthy for Himself."¹

The contrast between this teaching as to the future life and the doctrine of Ecclesiasticus is very remarkable. This purely Hebrew book shows no trace of the Greek philosophy. The hope even of a resurrection of the body seems to be passing away, for we are told that "Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that

¹ *Wisd.* i. 13; iii. 1-5.

is not : the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord.”¹

The learned Dr. Edersheim sums up the Jewish tradition at the time of the birth of Christ in these words :—

“ It were idle, and could only be painful here to detail the various and discordant sayings of the Rabbis, some of which, at least, may admit of an allegorical interpretation. Both the Talmud and the Targum teach that Paradise and Hell were created before this world. One quotation from the Jerusalem Targum (on Gen. iii. 24) will not only sufficiently prove this, but show the general current of Jewish teaching :—

“ ‘ Two thousand years,’ we read, ‘ before the world was made, God created the Law and Gehenna, and the Garden of Eden. He made the Garden of Eden for the righteous, that they might eat of the fruits thereof, and delight themselves in them, because in this world they had kept the commandments of the Law. But for the wicked He prepared Gehenna, which is like a sharp two-edged destroying sword. He put within it sparks of fire and burning coals, to punish the wicked in the world to come, because they had not observed the commandments of the Law in this world. For the Law is the tree of life. Whosoever observeth it shall live and subsist as the tree of life. Paradise and Hell were supposed to be contiguous only, separated, it was said, perhaps allegorically, by an handbreadth.’¹ Again, ‘ As for the “ after death ” —Paradise, Hell, the resurrection, and the judgment—voices are more discordant than ever. . . . There is a kind of purgation, if not purgatory, after death. Some, even,’ of the Rabbis, ‘ have held the annihilation of the wicked. Taking the wildest and most generous views

¹ Eccl. xvii. 28.

of the Rabbis, they may be thus summed up : All Israel have share in the world to come ; the pious among the Gentiles also have part in it. *Only the perfectly just enter at once into Paradise ; all the rest pass through a period of purification and perfection*, variously lasting, up to one year. But notorious breakers of the law, and especially apostates from the Jewish faith and heretics, have no hope whatever, either here or hereafter ! Such is the last word which the Synagogue has to say to mankind.' " 1

Thus we have here, in Jewish tradition at the time of our Lord, three conditions (not *places*) after death ; two permanent—Hell, or Gehenna, and Paradise—and the other a temporary state of purgation. There is, however, much discussion and controversy as to the real Jewish tradition at the time of our Lord.² There were many theories current, but it seems beyond question, from a consideration of various authorities, that the Jews of our Lord's day were quite familiar with the idea of eternal happiness and eternal punishment, and of a punishment which for some would end in annihilation, and for others in a restoration, towards which they were helped by the prayers of those living on earth.

¹ *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, pp. 175, 176, 180.

² For a full discussion of this subject, consult Dr. Pusey's *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment* ; Farrar's *Mercy and Judgment* ; Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*, vol. ii. app. xix. pp. 788-793.

IV

THE NEW TESTAMENT—HADES

WE have seen that it would be a great mistake to suppose that we can pass at once from the Old to the New Testament. Between them there is a gap of about four centuries, and it is the knowledge of the beliefs that took a definite form during that period that alone can enable us to gauge the meaning of much of the teaching given to the world by Jesus Christ and His apostles.

The vague hope and guesses as to a future life that are found here and there in the Old Testament had in these centuries developed, and were now associated with well understood terms. Our Lord did not come to destroy but to purify and perfect the doctrine of the Jewish Church, and to reveal God to the world. If the traditions of the Jews as to the life after death had been entirely or even largely mistaken, the first duty

of an enlightened teacher would be to avoid adopting the terminology associated with this erroneous teaching, and in its place very plainly to set forth the truth as far as it could be expressed in human language.

When, therefore, we find that our Lord did not reject the traditional language of the Gentile and the Jew as to a future life, but, on the contrary, accepted and used it, we can only conclude that in the main the Gentile and the Jew had come very near to the truth.

And yet when we speak of the truth, it is very probable that all the language used in Holy Scripture as to the spiritual world is highly symbolical. For instance we cannot conceive how the omnipresent Deity can in any but an entirely figurative sense be said to be localized or in one place more than in another. But, in the Bible, Heaven is spoken of as the place where the Divine glory of the illimitable Deity is sensibly manifested.

Heaven is spoken of as "the throne of God," and, however large may be the element of metaphor, there is surely a sense in which the words are true.

The Old Testament continually asserts or takes for granted [that Heaven is the dwelling-place of God, and this was emphasized by the words of

our Lord. He speaks again and again of “ My Father which is in Heaven,” and in teaching His disciples to pray He bade them say, “ Our Father which art in Heaven.” We can only conclude, therefore, that there is some place which may properly be called the abode of Him Whom “ the Heaven of heavens cannot contain.” From this Heaven our Lord said that He had come, and spoke of Heaven—as it is invariably spoken of in the Bible—as a region above this earth : “ No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven.”¹ So also in the Creed it is said not only that He “ came down from Heaven,” but also that “ He ascended into Heaven.”

In speaking of Heaven, then, as the abode of God in some special sense, our Lord used well understood language, and made no attempt to anticipate the language of science as to “ above ” and “ below ” in relation to this earth.

The Jews seem to have had no idea of Heaven as the destined home of the righteous, at any rate before the resurrection ; but even as our Lord taught His disciples to look upon God rather than Abraham as their Father, so He also taught them

¹ St. John iii. 13.

to think of Heaven as their home rather than Abraham's bosom.

When we turn from the language used in the New Testament about Heaven to consider what it says of the other regions of the unseen world, there is more difficulty, owing to the fact that in the English Bible (A.V.) the one word "Hell" stands for three different Greek words used by the writer—Hades, Gehenna, and Tartarus. In the Revised Version this fatal mistake is corrected either in the text or in the marginal readings. It is essential to distinguish clearly between the words Hades and Gehenna. Hades is the whole nether world—the equivalent of Sheol in the Old Testament. Dives and Lazarus, as we have seen, are both in Hades, one in that part wherein souls are punished and corrected, and the other in the part where they rest in joy and peace.

Gehenna also is a part of Hades, and the word seems to be used by our Lord for that more penal department in which the wicked are detained without hope of escape. This may be seen by reference to passages in the Gospels where the word "Hell" is mentioned, using the Revised Version.

We have seen in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that the rich man was in Hades but it is not clear from the wording of the story

that Lazarus was also in Hades, though in another part of that nether world. He is spoken of as being “in Abraham’s bosom,”¹ which the Jews also called Paradise. It was to this place that the spirit of our Lord passed from the cross. In the Creed we say “He descended into Hell,” and a proof that this place was a part of Hades is seen by a reference to Acts ii. 31, “He (David) foreseeing this, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.” Our Lord says that Capernaum shall be “brought down to Hades”²; but when He wishes to insist on a state of punishment, He no longer speaks of Hades as a whole, but of Gehenna: “Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Gehenna.”³ We do not, of course, suppose that He meant literally either that Capernaum had been “exalted unto Heaven,” or would be “brought down to Hades.” He employs a figure of speech to signify the overthrow of the city—its fall shall be as marked as the transition from the fullness of life to the nothingness of death. If He had said that Capernaum should be brought down to Gehenna, the idea conveyed would have been not so much its overthrow, as the exemplary

¹ St. Luke xvi. 22.

² St. Matt. xi. 23.

³ St. Matt. x. 28.

suffering and possibly the destruction of its inhabitants. Again, speaking of the future foundation of His Church, our Lord declared that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”¹ This probably means that the Church shall not die out but continue her life “all days even unto the end of the world.”²

It is clear, then, that to speak of one in Hades tells us nothing as to his condition except that he is among the dead. He may be in joy and peace, or he may be in torment. If, from what we are told, we learn that the soul is suffering, we conclude that it is in that part of Hades called Gehenna. If, on the other hand, we are told the soul is in joy and peace, we conclude that it rests in that part of Hades known to the Jews as Abraham’s bosom, Gan Eden, and Paradise.

We have seen that our Lord confirmed the Jewish belief that Gehenna was a place of punishment. He even added to the terrors associated with the word. It is a place where the “fire shall never be quenched,” “where their worm dieth not.”³ Our Lord does not say that the wicked shall for ever remain conscious in this torment. The fire remains unquenched, but

¹ St. Matt. xvi. 18.

² St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

³ St. Mark ix. 46.

whether or no there may be deliverance from it is another question. If the souls that fall into Gehenna abide there everlasting, then in Gehenna we have “the Hell of the lost” such as almost all Christendom has believed in ; if, on the contrary, the souls in Gehenna are only there for a time, then the Gehenna of the Gospels is nothing else than a purgatory as terrible as any that the imagination has ever pictured. There remains, however, the possibility that some souls might be temporarily punished and perfected in Gehenna, while others may remain there for ever. We know from the classics of ancient Greece and Rome that the Gentiles were accustomed to think of Tartarus in this twofold aspect, and that the Jews at the time of the Incarnation had in a measure assimilated this doctrine. In the second epistle attributed to St. Peter the word we have translated “Hell” is in the original “Tartarus.”¹ The question is, whether our Lord, in accepting the general idea of Gehenna, accepted also the belief that for some souls, if not for all, the punishment there was but temporary. If no such belief had been known to the Jews there is certainly nothing in any of the statements of Christ that would have introduced such an idea.

¹ 2 St. Pet. ii. 4.

But this is not a sufficient proof that such belief is erroneous. Our Lord by no means passed over corrupt traditions of the Jews. His language on fasting, prayer, and almsgiving severely censured popular misconceptions. It is, then, remarkable that we have not a word of censure for the tradition that there is a merely temporary punishment for some sins in the other world. But this is not all. To the Jews our Lord's words, on more than one occasion, must have been a strong confirmation of their belief. When He spoke of a prison whence none should go out until the uttermost farthing had been paid,¹ it is all but certain that He intended to imply that the sum could never be forthcoming. On the contrary, when He spoke of all sins, except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, as pardonable either here or hereafter,² He certainly confirmed those who heard Him in their belief that some sins were expiated after death.

Again, He spoke of the servant who knew not his lord's will, and how he should be beaten with few stripes.³ This teaching, we may suppose, indicates our Lord's acceptance rather than His rejection of the Jewish and Gentile belief that some souls might fall into Gehenna (Tartarus)

¹ St. Matt. v. 26.

² St. Matt. xii. 32.

³ St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

and, after a few stripes, pass upward. This possibility becomes almost a certainty when we find that the dead were prayed for before the coming of Christ, as they have been prayed for ever since His coming, by the Jews. It stands to reason that it would be useless to pray for those whose condition could in no way be bettered.

Volumes have been written on the meaning of single words used by our Lord, such as æonian, judgment, punishment, life, etc. And what is the result? Merely to prove that these words do not in themselves settle the question whether the souls of the wicked suffer everlasting or are utterly destroyed. The mere fact, however, that almost all Christians have, from the first, thought that our Lord taught the possibility of some being for ever punished in Gehenna and excluded from Heaven, is a proof that such teaching lies at any rate on the surface of the New Testament. We may revolt against the doctrine, but the fact remains that whereas there is little or nothing in the Old Testament—where it might have been looked for—to support it, it is from our Lord's own lips that the teaching of the existence of Gehenna has been learned by the Church, and it is in His words that we find the most terrible descriptions of the place where "the fire is not quenched," and where there is "weeping and

gnashing of teeth.”¹ When all has been said that can be said, nothing can alter the fact that the New Testament has taught men to believe in everlasting punishment, and that our Lord Himself speaks of the duration of joy in Heaven as exactly parallel to the duration of suffering in Gehenna. “These,” He said, “shall go away into aeonian punishment, but the righteous into life æonian.”²

To sum up this chapter, our Lord unquestionably taught that the soul survived the death of the body, and its continued existence in Hades. He made frequent mention of Gehenna—a place or state of suffering. As in His teaching He usually represents the wicked passing into this state *after* the final judgment, it would seem as if He did not wish to represent this state of suffering as terminable. On the other hand, in the only instance where our Lord speaks of the soul in the intermediate state before the resurrection (i.e. in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus), it is possible to interpret what He tells us in a way that would make the suffering in Hades to be educational—not merely penal. Thus we may say that our Lord endorsed the doctrine already familiar to the Gentile and the Jew, that hereafter some souls are temporarily

¹ St. Matt. viii. 12.

² St. Matt. xxv. 46.

punished and reformed, while of the chastisement of the hopelessly wicked He disclosed no end. We turn now to what is told us about the state of consolation called Abraham's bosom and Paradise.

V

THE NEW TESTAMENT—PARADISE

THE orthodox Jews were accustomed to speak of the abode in Hades where the souls of the righteous awaited the resurrection as Abraham's bosom, Gan Eden, and Paradise.

Our Lord used well understood words when He spoke of Lazarus as "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" ¹; and also when from the cross He gave to the penitent robber the promise, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." ²

Our Lord, however, added nothing to the knowledge of those He addressed as to the condition of the soul in the interval between the death and resurrection of the body. We must, therefore, look a little more carefully into the sacred Scriptures if we would understand the teaching that gathers around the intermediate state of the

¹ St. Luke xvi. 22.

² St. Luke xxiii. 43.

righteous; for we shall find that it is closely associated with much that concerns the fall and the redemption of man.

In one sense Paradise and Abraham's bosom are synonymous, but in another sense they are widely different. This difference is suggested by the fact that after the crucifixion the word Paradise is used twice in the New Testament¹ when the future life is spoken of, while we hear no more of Abraham's bosom.

The word Paradise, though it is used in the Old Testament in its Hebrew form (*Pardes*), was borrowed probably by the Jews from Persia. In its original signification the word simply means a beautiful park or pleasure-garden. After the conquests of Alexander the Great the word gained a recognised place in the language of the Hellenistic Jews, and was adopted by those who translated the Pentateuch into Greek as the equivalent of the "garden" that the Lord God "planted eastward in Eden."² By an easy succession of ideas the word then became associated with the future home of rest and tranquil enjoyment into which Abraham, the father of the faithful, was thought to welcome his children at the hour of their death, or when they were purified and made ready for their

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7.

² Gen. ii. 8.

reward. So far, then, the two titles, Paradise and Abraham's bosom, are synonymous. It is only when we remember that in the primeval earthly paradise (Eden) man enjoyed the society and the friendship of God, that we notice the great difference between the state of man in Eden and the conception of the future life conveyed under the figure of Abraham's bosom. In the one we have as its characteristic the thought of the presence of God, while in the other God is apparently absent and the patriarch takes His place ! To account for this we must go back to the earliest record that there is of man in the Bible.

It is clear that at some period of time man became conscious of a choice between good and evil ; of power to obey or to disobey some law written in the heart ; to listen to the voice of conscience as the voice of God or to turn away from God. Man chose to disobey and became conscious of a loss of communion with God. This "fall," and its consequent separation of man from God, is symbolised or allegorically portrayed in Genesis. We read that as a consequence of man's disobedience, "The Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden (Paradise) . . . and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned

every way to keep the way of the tree of life.”¹

However figurative this language may be, it is evidently intended to teach us the undoubted fact that sin means a separation from God, and the loss of the conscious joy of His presence.

The promise, however, was given of a Redeemer Who, as “the Seed of the woman,” should bruise the serpent’s head.² It was only when the promise had been fulfilled, and the Son of Man had overcome death and opened to us the closed gate of life, that the voice came from Heaven with the promise that “to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of *God*.”³

It was a true instinct, then, which led the Jews to speak of the righteous dead as in Abraham’s bosom rather than the bosom of God; for until Jesus Christ “the Seed of the woman,” had “opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers” and Himself entered therein, the souls of the righteous were excluded from the Vision of God.

It is strange that any Christian should doubt that the Passion effected an alteration in the intermediate state, or think that they who have fallen asleep in Christ Jesus are still excluded from the presence of God. Such a doubt is the more strange because the language of the Epistles is

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

² Gen. iii. 15.

³ Rev. ii. 7.

noticeably different from language used in the Gospels about the life after death. Before the Ascension the place our Lord spoke of as Paradise is referred to as beneath the earth. St. Paul writes : “ Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? ”¹ and St. Peter tells us that Jesus Christ was “ put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit ; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”² Moreover in the Apostles’ Creed we say that “ He descended into Hell ”³ (*descendit ad inferos*)—that is, into Hades, the nether world, the place of the righteous dead.

We have to contrast these references to Paradise—before our Lord’s resurrection—as a place beneath, with the words of St. Paul, which speak of it as a place above. “ I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago . . . such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise.”⁴ By Paradise in this passage the great commentator Cornelius à Lapide understands the highest heaven ; but however this may be, it is clear that Paradise is no longer a place to which one could be said to *descend*. It could no longer be thought

¹ Eph. iv. 9.

² 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19.

³ Apostles’ Creed.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

of as in “the lower parts of the earth,” or as a “prison,” or “Hell.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem, writing in the fourth century, has the same belief as that quoted above. He says: “Elias was taken up only to Heaven, but Paul into Heaven and into Paradise; for it behoved the disciple of Jesus to receive more manifold grace,”¹ etc.

The next reference to Paradise is in the Revelation of St. John, where the reward “to him that overcometh” is that he shall “eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”² Does not this transference of the imagery of the earthly paradise bear out the contention that where God reveals His presence, there is now the true Paradise?

Archbishop Trench, in his *Epistles to the Seven Churches*,³ traces the gradual development of the meaning of the word paradise. He says:—

“We may thus trace Παράδεισος, passing through an ascending scale of meanings. From any garden of delight, which is its first meaning, it comes to be predominantly applied to the Garden of Eden, then to the resting-place of separate souls in joy and felicity, and lastly to the very Heaven itself; and we see eminently in it, what we see indeed in so many words, how revealed religion assumes them into its service, and makes them

¹ *Catech. Lect.* xiv. 26.

² Rev. ii. 7.

³ p. 102.

vehicles of far higher truth than any which they knew at first, transforming and transfiguring them, as in this case, from glory to glory."

What, then, is the cause of this change of language, which speaks of Paradise, not as in "the lower parts of the earth," but as being where "He ascended up on high?" Cornelius à Lapide explains it in four words: *Ubi Christus ibi paradisus. Ubi visio Dei, et beatitudo, ibi est cælum.* "Where Christ is, there is Paradise: where the vision of God is, and beatitude, there is Heaven."¹

When Christ descended into Hades, He made "Abraham's bosom" to be really a Paradise. But our Lord's sojourn in Hades was only temporary—between His death and resurrection. When He arose from the dead, did the souls that had welcomed the coming of the Redeemer remain where they were, again deprived of His presence? Surely not. The tradition of the Church, for which there is not wanting Scriptural proof, is, that at His resurrection our Lord led forth all the perfected spirits of the righteous who had been held captive by death.

St. Matthew distinctly says that "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His

¹ *In Evangelia, on St. Luke xxiii. 43.*

resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” Our Lord, then, we may believe, “led forth the ransomed saints to light”; ¹ He emptied the abode in which the souls of the righteous had hitherto awaited His coming, and gave them a share in His resurrection. We know that during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension our Lord lived for the most part a hidden life. Only at rare intervals did He appear to His disciples. It may be that He lived in the company of those He had freed from death in a spiritual world which is veiled from the eyes of those who are still in the natural body. Before His resurrection it needed an exercise of our Lord’s supernatural power to hide Himself from the sight of men—after His resurrection it required an exercise of this power to manifest Himself. He had begun to enter into the kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit. St. Paul, speaking of the natural body, says that “whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord”; but they who are “absent from the body,” or clothed with the spiritual body of the new life, are “present with the Lord.”²

This may explain the statement of St. Paul

¹ Hymn *Aurora cælum purpurat*, trans. A & M. 126.

² 2 Cor. v. 6-8.

when, speaking of the Ascension, he says that “when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.”¹ He ascended not alone, but, as a great conqueror, He led in His train multitudes whom He had ransomed and to whom He now “opened the kingdoms of the heavens.”² This is the traditional belief of the Catholic Church. Cornelius à Lapide says: “Christ delivered the patriarchs, prophets and other holy ones from the dominion of Hades, and having made them captives by His holy and happy captivity, He, triumphing, led them up to Heaven.” The teaching of the better sort of the English Reformers is found in *The Institution of a Christian Man*: “Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, at His entry into Hell, first conquered and oppressed both the Devil and Hell, and also death itself . . . afterward He spoiled Hell and delivered and brought with Him from thence all the souls of the righteous and good men which from the fall of Adam died in the favour of God, and in the faith and belief of our Saviour, which was then to come.”

The Passion of Christ has merited that all should escape the dominion of death, as soon as whatever is akin to death—sin and its results—

¹ Eph. iv. 8. In margin of A.V. we read, led “a great multitude of captives.”

² *Te Deum*, “regna cœlorum.”

be done away in the soul. Since the Ascension they who depart hence in the grace of God, and have been perfected in Hades, are at once admitted to the “spirits of just men made perfect,” who are “with Christ” in Heaven. Hence St. Gregory the Great says: “Who doubteth not that Christ is in Heaven, doubteth not also that the soul of Paul is in Heaven.”

Hence, in the later language of the Church, Paradise is a synonym for Heaven, though it is the custom of some to associate the word Heaven with the “state of glory” which is entered after the resurrection. As long as we believe that “the spirits of just men made perfect” are no longer excluded from the Vision of God, it is not a matter of any great moment whether we associate their blissful life with the name of Paradise or Heaven. The only Christians who deny and maintain that none can enter Heaven until after the final judgment, are found in the moderate “High Church” section of the Anglican Communion. They seem to deny that the Passion has altered the state of the dead in Christ, and still think of them as in exactly the same place as before our Lord “opened the kingdoms of the Heavens to all believers.” In this they agree with the Jews, and some of the Fathers who lived before the terminology of theologians had taken

its final form, and there was little, if any, agreement on eschatological doctrine.

The assertion of these Anglicans, who assert that Paradise is not one and the same state or place as Heaven, seems refuted by the fact that Paradise is where Christ is, and He is in the highest heaven, or as St. Paul expresses it, "above all heavens."

All Catholics—Roman, Orthodox Eastern, and Anglican—then, are agreed that Heaven and Paradise are, since the Ascension of Christ, synonymous.

VI

THE TEACHING OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

WHEN we come to consider what was the doctrine of [the Church of the apostles as to the state of the soul between death and the resurrection, we must start our inquiry by recalling to mind one or two important facts. In the first place it is essential to remember that the disciples at Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, headed by "James the Lord's brother," and by Peter and John, were strict Jews of the orthodox school. They seem not to have understood the command to "make disciples of all nations"¹ as meaning more than a mission to make converts to Judaism who would accept, as they had done, Jesus as the Messiah. St. Peter needed a special revelation to enable him to baptize Cornelius.²

¹ St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Acts x.

This being so, we have no reason to suppose that the apostles would depart from the belief as to the future life held by the orthodox Jews, and accepted by Jesus Christ as a background for some of His parables.

The other important point to notice is that St. Paul, in spite of being a Jew, does in one most important point entirely ignore the Jewish doctrine that the souls of the righteous are not in Heaven until after the resurrection of the body, but await the end in Abraham's bosom. He asserts quite plainly that such souls depart to be "with Christ," and though "absent from the body," and not yet clothed with the risen body, yet are they "present with the Lord."¹ And he leaves us in no doubt where Christ is, for he tells us that He has "ascended up far above all heavens."² This is a statement whith no Jew, as such, could have made ; it is the assertion of the truth which we have already noticed, that the death of Christ worked a great change not only for the living but for the dead ; that in overcoming death "He opened the kingdoms of the heavens to all believers."³ Here, then, we have one point of the most vital importance, relating to the intermediate state, revealed by St. Paul.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 8.

² Eph. iv. 10.

³ "Aperuisti credentibus regna cœlorum." *Te Deum,*

Heaven is open ; the “many mansions”¹ are prepared, but obviously only for those who are fit to enter therein, for “there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”²

It is, then, to Heaven that the apostle directs his gaze, and would have us also look as our future home when “our earthly house of this tabernacle”³ is dissolved.

But what of the many who depart this life in a very imperfect state ? What of those whose repentance comes late in life and who have only just begun to bring forth the fruits of repentance ? They cannot be for ever “lost,” for they were penitent. They cannot at once enter Heaven, for their spiritual life has only just begun ; they have not that perfect holiness without which no man can find joy in the Presence of God. They are “saved, yet so as by fire.”⁴ St. Paul tells us nothing of the condition of these souls after death, and it may be for the following reasons.

There is no doubt that the Church of the apostles looked for a very speedy return of Christ, and this expectation was founded upon

¹ St. John xiv. 2.

² Rev. xxi. 27.

³ 2 Cor. v. 1.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 15.

certain words of our Lord that seemed plainly to assert that He would come in glory before some who heard Him should die: “ For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels ; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”¹ St. Paul, then, believed that the second coming of Christ would happen before all of those to whom he wrote had “ fallen asleep.” He says that those Christians who had already died shall not suffer loss through their having passed away before Christ’s appearance in glory, but on the contrary they will arise the first, and “ then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”²

This expectation of the speedy return of Christ and the coming of “ the end ”³ naturally made any consideration of the intermediate state less important than it would otherwise have been. The fervour of the first converts was another reason why the state of the sinful after death was not a subject that pressed for determination.

¹ St. Matt. xvi. 27, 28. ² 1 Thess. iv. 17.

³ St. Matt. xxiv. 14.

The Christian converts were in constant danger owing to the persecution to which they were subjected by the hostile pagans, and the still more bitter Jews who had rejected the Messiah and were furious with those who accepted Him. It was, then, to the bright hope of passing from the trials and persecutions of earth to the joy of their Lord that the apostle directed the thoughts of those to whom he addressed his epistles.

It was only when several generations of Christians had passed away, and an immediate hope of the return of Christ falsified, that it became desirable to discuss the state of the imperfect souls of the departed.

From the writings of the post-apostolic apologists we gather that there was even less agreement than we should have expected. In spite of what St. Paul had said as to the righteous dead being “present with the Lord,”¹ in a sense in which they had not been present while on earth, some of these early Christian writers seem to have fallen back into the Jewish belief that none were admitted into Heaven until after the resurrection. The Jews who rejected Christ, naturally did not allow that His death and resurrection had altered the state of the dead, but it is strange that Christian apologists with St. Paul’s words

¹ 2 Cor. v. 6-9.

before them, should have been in agreement with them.

Among those who held that Heaven was still closed we may mention St. Irenæus and Tertullian. Irenæus asserts that, "Souls depart at death into the place appointed for them of God, and there they abide until the resurrection, when they will take again their bodies, and rise in the completeness of their nature, as the Lord rose; and so they will come to the vision of God."

Tertullian definitely asserts that, "Heaven is open to none, while the earth remains . . . ; with the passing away of the world the kingdom of Heaven will be thrown open." And he does not hesitate explicitly to contradict St. Paul by asserting that, "None when he leaves the body is at once at home with the Lord, unless he enjoys the martyr's privilege."

Here we shall do well to note that even Tertullian allows that some (the martyrs) enter Heaven before the resurrection, so that he cannot be said to support those few Anglicans who hold that Heaven is open to none, even the martyrs, until after the final judgment.

St. Clement of Alexandria has some characteristically mystical and symbolical teaching as to the future state of the imperfect. "To know is more than to believe, as to be dignified with the

highest honour after being saved is a greater thing than being saved. Accordingly the believer, through great discipline, divesting himself of the passions, passes to the mansion which is better than the former one.”¹ He teaches that there is great suffering to be endured, “though the punishments cease in the course of the completion of the expiation and purification of each one.” Much of Clement’s imagery is borrowed from myths and speculations of Greece and Rome, and, combined with the theories of some of the Jews, it seems as if he accepted a belief as to the next world very similar to the mediæval purgatory. But his teaching is all to be interpreted mystically. Thus, of the doctrine of the soul’s purification by fire, he tells us that, “the fire sanctifies not flesh, but sinful souls: meaning not the all-devouring common fire, but that discriminating fire (wisdom) which pervades the soul which passes through the fire ? ”² But it is easy to see how the mysticism of Clement of Alexandria would prepare the way for a crude doctrine of a purgation by material fire such as prevailed in the Middle Ages and is still believed by the less educated people in many parts of Christendom.

In passing from the second to the third century,

¹ *Stromata.* Book VI. ch. xiv.

² *Ibid.* Book VII. ch. vi.

we find St. Cyprian has not been influenced by the teaching of Irenæus and Tertullian. He is in full agreement with St. Paul. He writes: "Let us embrace the day which commits each of us to his own resting-place ; which, after rescuing us hence, . . . places us back in Paradise, and in the heavenly kingdom : Paradise we are to reckon our native land (*patria*) ; patriarchs are now our parents : wherefore not haste and run to behold our country, to salute our parents ? . . . O sweet, heavenly realms, where death can never terrify, and life never end ! Ah, perfect and perpetual bliss ! There is the glorious company of the apostles: there is the assembly of the prophets exulting: there is the innumerable company of the martyrs, crowned after their victory and passion. . . . To these, dearest brethren, let us with eager longings hasten : let it be the portion which we desire speedily to be among them, speedily to be gone to Christ."

The great Fathers of the fourth century are still clearer, yet even in their writings we must not expect to find, any more than in those of the earlier writers, any absolute agreement either in their teaching or terminology as to the future state. They so persistently dwell on the glory of the risen life that it is not at all easy to find out exactly what they believed was the condition

of souls before the resurrection. Sometimes they contradict in one passage what they seem to teach in another.

It appears that St. John Chrysostom thought that the sinful dead were not only shut out from Paradise (Heaven), but were "with the condemned"—with the reprobate. He does not suppose that their state is hopeless, but, as we shall see in the following chapter, they may be helped by the efforts of their friends on earth.

The great Doctor of the West—St. Augustine—comments on the words of St. Paul, "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."¹ He understands this to mean that those who have been too much attached to earthly things will suffer great grief when these things are lost. The things themselves perish, but the man is saved, "yet so as by fire, because the grief for what he loved and has lost burns him." St. Augustine immediately continues: "And it is not impossible that something of the same kind may take place even after this life. It is a matter that may be inquired into, and either ascertained

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 13-15.

or left doubtful, whether some believers shall pass through a kind of purgatorial fire, and in proportion as they have loved with more or less devotion the goods which perish, may be more or less quickly delivered from it.”¹ Some of the early Fathers appear to have thought of the dead as sleeping until the resurrection, and then passing through a purgatorial fire, as the meaning of St. Paul’s words “saved, yet so as by fire.”

To sum up what may be gathered from the Fathers of the Primitive Church as to the condition of those souls who were not fit to pass straight from the body to be “with Christ,” we find that all who wrote on the subject taught either (1) a judgment-day purification, through which all must pass, or, (2) a purification preparatory to a millennial reign of Christ on the earth; or, lastly, (3) an intermediate state of purification in Hades, ending either at the judgment or when the work of the soul’s perfecting is accomplished, before the resurrection of the body.

The whole Church of God, from the very first, unquestionably attached the greatest importance to public and private prayer for the souls of the dead; but the Church was content to pray, give alms, and offer the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, without attempting to dogmatize as to

¹ *Enchiridion*, 69.

the condition of the souls for whom she prayed. We see from the primitive Liturgies that she desired something more for the departed than a joyful resurrection, and a merciful judgment at the last day. She prayed for them that, even now, they might obtain rest and peace, that they might be released from captivity and attain to the joys of Paradise. With but few exceptions the Fathers spoke of the righteous as already with Christ where He is—in Paradise. Those who were excluded from Paradise the Church simply commended to the mercy of God. She did not profess to say in what way her prayers were effectual, or for what souls they were, or were not, effectual. These matters were known to God alone; her one duty was to see that none neglected to pray for the departed, and leave the rest to the Father of spirits. Only a Church, then, which is instant in prayer and offering the Eucharist and almsgiving for the departed, can make any claim to follow the Primitive and Apostolic Church of Christ. This will be seen more clearly from the following chapter.

VII

THE WITNESS OF THE PRIMITIVE LITURGIES

HOWEVER diverse may have been the beliefs as to what we may call the geography of the unseen world in the Primitive Church, there was perfect agreement as to the practical duty of the living towards their dead. Here the Church showed herself to be a teacher who knew that her office was to lead the Faithful, and instruct them as to their duty.

To pray is an instinct of human nature, and prayer for the welfare of others has always held a place among the petitions offered to the supreme Being. In all ages those who believed that there is a life after death, and that the soul survives its separation from the body, have, as far as we know, continued to pray or perform sacred rites for their friends. Thus we find that what are called "prayers for the dead" are by no means

found only among Christians, but that, like much else, they came to the Church of Christ through the Jewish Church, and were in common use among all the religions of antiquity.

Christianity is not an entirely new religion dating from the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was the birthday of the Christian Church as a distinct organism, but the Christian faith was only in a few points a new revelation. "The scattered truths which had wandered up and down the earth, and had been in part adored, and in part held in unrighteousness, were now elected and called home, and, as it were, regenerated and gathered into one blessed company, and glorified once more as the witnesses of the Eternal."¹

How mistaken, then, are they who think to weaken Christianity by showing that it is largely made up of beliefs which have some sort of resemblance to what is found in non-Christian religions of antiquity! The Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension have all had some dim and dark prototype in paganism. The priesthood, the sacraments, and the rites and ceremonial of the Church, are the realities of which both the Jews and Gentiles possessed the types and shadows. So that those Protestants who desire to eliminate all doctrines and practices

¹ *The Unity of the Church*, H. E. Manning (1845).

from Christianity that paganism in some measure anticipated will find but little of Christianity left in Protestantism.

Now, the practice for praying for the souls of the dead was one familiar to the Jews, and we have good reason to suppose that prayers and sacrifices for the dead formed some part of the Temple services. In the first or second century before the Christian era, we have the witness of the second book of the Maccabees to some such public and liturgical prayer for those slain in battle. We read that, if Judas Maccabeus "had not believed that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead."

But, as he believed, he collected a large sum and sent it to Jerusalem, "to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly in that he was mindful of the resurrection."¹ We have no right, then, to expect any explicit revelation to be given to the Christian Church on points that were praiseworthy, and already familiar to the Jews. They would naturally retain their old belief and practice when they accepted Christ, except in any point that Christ condemned.

We have not the slightest reason to suppose that prayer for the departed was so condemned;

¹ 2 Mac. xii. 43-45.

indeed, we may be quite sure that it was not, or it would not be found in the earliest records of the Church as a practice about which there was no dispute.¹ The only objection made in early times to such prayer came from Aerius, a notorious Arian heretic.

Many commentators think that Onesiphorus was dead when St. Paul uttered the prayer, ‘The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.’²

Sir William M. Ramsay discovered at Hieropolis, in Upper Phrygia, the famous Abercius monument which bears on it what is probably the most ancient example of a Christian prayer for the dead, in these words, “Let the fellow-believer who understands these words pray for Abercius.”

In the Catacombs are found numerous short petitions for the departed, such as “May God refresh thy spirit”; “Mayest thou live unto God.”

Tertullian, who was born about thirty years after the death of St. John the Evangelist, speaks of the custom of praying for the dead as one well known and taken for granted in his day. He

¹ St. John Chrysostom says, “Not in vain did the *Apóstolos* order that remembrance should be made of the dead in the dreadful Mysteries.” Hom. iii. on Phil. i. 24.

² 2 Tim. i. 16-18.

says in his defence of Christian usages, “ We offer, on one day every year, oblations (i.e. the Eucharist) for the dead as birthday honours.”¹ Again, Tertullian speaks of a widow praying for the soul of her husband, and asking that, until the resurrection he may be in a place of cool refreshment.² It need hardly be said that prayers for the departed find a place in all the Liturgies of the Primitive Church, and that the Fathers of the Church take for granted that prayer for the souls of the departed is an ordinary Christian duty. It would, then, require a volume instead of a few pages to consider the references in the writings of the Fathers that illustrate their belief as to the efficacy of such prayers.

All that is possible here is to state briefly for whom among the departed prayer was offered ; what were the benefits sought in these prayers ; and lastly, where was it supposed that the souls were abiding—were they in Paradise or in Hades ?

In trying to answer the question, “ For whom among the departed were the prayers of the Church desired in the early centuries ? ” we must remember that God alone can know the real spiritual condition of any soul when it passes out of this world.

“ He that judgeth me is the Lord,”³ wrote

¹ *De Cor.* v. 3. ² *Refrigerium.* ³ *1 Cor.* iv. 4.

St. Paul, and he forbids any man to judge his brother in spiritual things, until such time as he can form a correct estimate. This will only become possible when at the final judgment all things shall be made manifest. Here on earth we can only form an opinion from what we see and hear. We cannot read the heart ; we cannot be sure that all we hear is true ; and still less can we tell how far heredity, environment, and a multitude of other circumstances may hinder actions that are materially wrong, from being formally guilty in the sight of God. Hence the need of bearing in mind the command : “ Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.”¹

This thought—that, because God alone knows the state of the soul, so He alone knows whither it passes at death—is beautifully expressed in a prayer of the Syro-Jacobite Liturgy of St. Maruthas : “ Remember, O Lord, through Thy grace, all those who . . . are departed out of this miserable life, and are *gone whither Thou only knowest* ; and give them rest among those delights which Thou hast promised to them that love Thee,

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

not calling to mind their sins and ours, for no man is without sin." Hence, as St. Augustine said, "Sacrifices either of the altar or of alms are offered on behalf of all the baptized dead; they are thank-offerings for the very good, they are propitiatory offerings for the not very bad." We may say, then, that the early Church prayed in her solemn Liturgy for all the baptized. Whether she offered publicly prayers for those who were not Christians we do not know. We may hope that such were prayed for, but it seems probable that the unbaptized were remembered in the private intercessions of their Christian friends rather than in the congregation.¹

In a certain sense even the martyrs and great saints, who were believed to be already in Heaven, were included in the prayers of the Church. It was believed that their glory was capable of increase, and that the resurrection would also fulfil their beatitude. But these prayers were

¹ St John Chrysostom says that public prayer during the Liturgy was in his time only offered for the faithful: "This we do for those only who have departed in the faith, while the Catechumens are not thought worthy even of this consolation, but are deprived of all means of help save one," i.e., almsgiving on their behalf (Hom. iii. on Phil. i. 24). This would certainly prove that for the heathen no public prayers were offered in the fourth century.

really more of a commemoration than intercession, as we gather from the study of the primitive Liturgies.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his description of the Liturgy, says :—

“ We commemorate also, those who have fallen asleep before us, first, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that at their prayers and intervention God would receive our petition. Afterwards, also on behalf of the holy fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and, in a word, of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great advantage to the souls for whom supplication is sent up, while the holy and most awful sacrifice is presented. And I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many will say, What is a soul profited that departs this world either with or without sins, if it be commemorated in prayer ? Now surely if, when a king had banished any one who had given him offence, their connexions were to weave a crown and offer it to him on behalf of those under his vengeance, would he not grant a respite to their punishment ? In the same way we, when we offer up to Him our supplications for those who have fallen asleep though they be sinners, weave no mere crown, but offer up Christ, sacrificed for our sins, propitiating our merciful God both for them and for ourselves.” ¹

The early Liturgies supply many beautiful prayers of the kind St. Cyril had in his mind. In the Liturgy of St. James the priest offers a long intercession for the Church, and in praying

¹ *Catech. Lect. xxiii. 10.*

for himself and the “deacons that surround the holy altar,” he continues :—

“ Grant them blessedness of life, . . . that they may find mercy and grace with all Thy saints that have been pleasing to Thee from one generation to another, since the beginning of the world—our ancestors, and fathers, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, confessors, teachers, holy persons, every just spirit made perfect in the faith of Thy Christ. Especially the most holy, spotless, excellently laudable glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary.

“ *Choir* : It is very meet to bless thee, the Mother of God, the ever blessed, the entirely spotless, more honourable than the Cherubim and infinitely more glorious than the Seraphim ; thee, who didst bear without corruption God the Word ; thee, verily, the Mother of God, we magnify. In thee, O full of grace, all creation exults, and the hierarchy of angels, and the race of men ; . . . glory to Thee.

“ *The Deacon* : Remember, O Lord our God.”

In the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the Mother of God, and the saints, are commemorated in much the same language. Then, later on, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit for the consecration, they are again commemorated and the priest continues with a prayer for the other departed : “ Remember all those that are departed in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life, and give them rest where the light of Thy countenance shines upon them.”

In the Liturgy of St. Mark, after a long com-

memoration such as that already quoted from the other Liturgies, the priest concludes with the prayer, "Give rest to their souls and vouchsafe to them the kingdom of Heaven."

In the eastern Syrian Liturgy, of which the Malabar Rite may be taken as an example, the Mother of God and saints are commemorated, and then the other departed in these words: "Let us remember also our fathers and brethren who have departed out of this world in the orthodox faith; let us pray, I say, to the Lord that He may absolve them, and forgive them their offences, and may vouchsafe that they, with all the just and righteous men who have obeyed the divine will, may rejoice for ever and ever."

The Liturgy of St. Peter is of a later date than the other Liturgies, owing to the fact that for some considerable time the Church of Rome used a Liturgy written in Greek. However, both the Petrine and the Ephesine groups of Liturgies form no exception to those of an earlier date, except that the language in which the Blessed Virgin and saints are commemorated is much less laudatory than that of the more ancient Eastern rites. In the Roman Liturgy the dead are prayed for in these simple and beautiful words: "Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids who have gone before us with

the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace.” To them, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, we beseech to grant a place of refreshment, light and peace.” And this was also the commemoration in our English Sarum Missal until the disaster of the sixteenth century robbed England at once of the Catholic faith as to the state of the dead, and of the Liturgy in which, in common with the rest of the Church, the commemoration of the saints and the dead had always held a place. It is scarcely credible that the men who did this were aiming at a return to primitive ideals.

In the ancient Liturgies, and in all the Catholic Liturgies of the present day, the commemoration of the Saints is usually separated from the prayers for the ordinary departed. For the commemoration of the Mother of God and the saints we have seen how laudatory are the terms used by the Church. When the other dead are prayed for the language is different, and God is asked to give them rest, to bring them to the kingdom, or to absolve them and to forgive their offences.

But from the writings of the Fathers of the Eastern Church we find that it was for the more apparently careless and sinful that people were especially urged to pray and to give alms. For instance, St. John Chrysostom rebukes those who make too great a lamentation at the loss of those

who die after leading a good life, but urges all to weep, pray, and to give alms for the more obviously sinful. He says:—

“ Worthy indeed of lamentations are they, when we consider the time when they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and the words they will then hear, and what they will then suffer ! To no purpose have these men lived : nay, not to no purpose merely, but to evil purpose ! . . . Why, here is a man who has lost all the labour of a whole life ; not one day has he lived profitably, but for luxury, debauchery, covetousness, sin, and the devil. Then, say, shall we not bewail this man ? shall we not try to snatch him from his perils ? For it is, yes, it is possible, if we will, to mitigate his punishment, if we make continual prayers for him, if for him we give alms. However unworthy he may be, God will yield to our importunity. . . . Not in vain are the oblations made for the dead, not in vain the alms-deeds : all those things hath the Spirit ordered, wishing us to be benefited one by the other. . . . It is not in vain that the Deacon cries, ‘ For them that are fallen asleep in Christ, and for them that make the memorials for them.’ It is not the Deacon that utters this voice but the Holy Spirit : I speak of the Gift. . . .”¹

When we turn to the Western Church we find that St. Augustine, while equally insistent upon the absolute duty of prayer for all the faithful departed, yet considers that such prayer is only of use for the soul that has died in the grace and

¹ Hom. xxi. on Acts ix. 28-38.

favour of God, though necessarily still imperfect. He says:—

“ Nor can it be denied that the souls of the dead are benefited by the piety of their living friends, who offer the sacrifice of the Mediator, or give alms on their behalf. But these services are of advantage only to those who during their lives have earned such merit that services of this kind can help them. For there is a manner of life which is neither so good as not to require these services after death, nor so bad that such services are of no avail ; there is, on the other hand, a kind of life so good as not to require them, and again, one so bad that when life is over they render no help. . . . When, then, sacrifices either of the altar or of alms are offered on behalf of the baptized dead, they are thank-offerings for the very good, they are propitiatory offerings for the not very bad ; and in the case of the very bad, even though they do not assist the dead, they are a species of consolation to the living. And where they are profitable their benefit consists either in obtaining a full remission of sins, or at least in making the condemnation more tolerable.”¹

But as God alone can know the state in which a soul passes out of this world these distinctions are of no practical use to us on earth in respect of our duty, which is, to pray for all the faithful departed, and to do alms-deeds and other good works on their behalf.

The questions we asked may, then, be answered in a few words as follows. The Church of God

¹ *The Enchiridion*, cix., cx.

from the time of the Apostles prayed for all the faithful departed. The benefits sought were a joyful resurrection; entrance into Paradise; forgiveness of sins; refreshment, light, peace and the mercy of God. Broadly speaking, the early Church knew of but two states or places hereafter—one of joy which is called by various names, Heaven, Paradise, the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., and one of sorrow, pain, and grief, called Hades, infernus (hell), etc. In these two places or states there were probably "many mansions," many degrees of nearness to God or separation from His Presence. Only the spirits of "just men made perfect" could at once enter Paradise. Who were thus perfect was, of course, known only to God, but it was from the first taken for granted that among these blessed ones were the Blessed Virgin, the apostles, martyrs and other saints. These being in Paradise were commemorated rather than prayed for as we have seen in the quotations from the Liturgies. The sin-stained souls of the bulk of the departed were prayed for as being shut out of Paradise. They were, as St. John Chrysostom says, "outside the palace, with the culprits, with the condemned." They were in Hades for punishment, for correction, and were rescued from Hades, if they were capable of salvation

by the prayers and sacrifices and alms of the Church on earth. This was the belief of the Eastern Church, and is so to this day. It was, as we have noticed elsewhere, much the same belief as that of the orthodox Jews in the time of our Lord, and was the common belief of those in ancient Greece and Rome who believed in the immortality of the soul. The Western Church came to differ from the Eastern on one point, and the difference remains to the present time. The Latins came to hold that there is in Hades a special *place*, apart from the reprobate, for the purification of penitent but imperfect souls. This place is called Purgatory. But it is more a difference of words than anything else.

The Church of England Homily *On Prayer* has little in common with primitive or orthodox doctrine beyond the assertion that only two states or places are to be believed, i.e., Heaven and Hell. The homily says:—

“The Scripture doth acknowledge but two places after this life—the one proper to the elect and blessed of God, the other to the reprobate and damned souls. . . . As the Scripture teacheth us, let us think that the soul of man passing out of the body goeth straightway either to Heaven or Hell, whereof the one needeth no prayer and the other is without redemption. Let us not dream either of Purgatory or of prayer for the souls of them that be dead.”

The Homily is a sharp contradiction, on the one hand, of the Western belief that Purgatory is a place or state distinct from the Hell of the reprobate, and, on the other, of the doctrine that Paradise and Heaven are not one and the same.¹ That the soul in Heaven "needeth no prayer" may be an attack on the primitive Liturgies, but it would be accepted as correct by the whole Church Catholic to-day, if commemoration is distinguished from prayer. The assertion that there is no hope of redemption from Hades (Hell) is a denial of the teaching of the Jews, and of the Fathers of the Church and of the Orthodox Eastern doctrine. The denial in general of the utility of prayers for the dead is, of course, a heresy opposed to the teaching of Holy Scripture and of the whole Church of Christ from the days of the apostles down to

¹ So late as the time of St. Thomas Aquinas there was no dogma as to a distinction between Hell and Purgatory. St. Thomas (died 1274) writes: "Idem est ignis purgatorii et inferni, et sic in eodem loco sunt," *Summa Theol.*, App., Q. i art. ii.

Dante (born 1265, died 1321) makes it clear that Purgatory was, when he wrote, considered as a place apart from infernus.

Several phrases survive in the *Missale Romanum* which express the Eastern rather than Latin doctrine, e.g., "ne absorbeat eas Tartarus"; "libera animas . . . de poenis inferni. . . ."

the present time. For such a short statement the number of errors is surely unprecedented !

The Western Church at one time agreed with the Eastern that there are but two states hereafter, but gradually the doctrine of a Purgatory distinct from *infernus* won its way to recognition, and the conservative Orthodox resent this and other developments of the West.

VIII

WHAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE AND DO

FROM what has been said it should now be clear that, from the days of the apostles down to the sixteenth century in the Western Church, and down to the present day in the Orthodox and other Communions of the East, the whole Christian Church on earth believed that after death there were—broadly speaking—two states or places, one of joy, and the other of suffering, either merely penal or for discipline and purification. These two states were Heaven and Hell, and in each were various degrees of joy or suffering—many mansions. All orthodox Christians believed that death was followed by judgment, according to the words of the apostle. “ It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. As God alone could know the condition of the soul at death, so He alone knew to which state the soul passed after death.

It was believed that all the sin-stained passed to the state of suffering. Some of these souls had, perhaps, finally quenched the Holy Spirit, and had departed this life obstinately impenitent. If such was the case, and God only could know, then for these there was no hope, they were for ever shut out from the presence of God—lost! But those who departed this life sin-stained, imperfect, and yet penitent, and so, capable of being educated, purified, and made perfect, passed into a state of purification. They were destined when the good work (perhaps, but just begun on earth) should be finished, to enter into the joy of their Lord—“ saved, yet so as by fire.” Again, God only could know who these were.

It will be seen, then, that as the Church on earth had no revelation as to what took place in the particular judgment of each soul at the hour of death, it was her evident duty to do what she could for all souls departed this life in the faith of Christ.

This duty the Church discharged by offering the Eucharist, prayer, and alms, for the dead. The only exception was that made in the case of certain great saints and martyrs whose names we now find in the calendar. The instinct of the Church made her sure that these were among those of whom St. Paul thought when he said

that to be "absent from the body" was "to be present with the Lord. These were "the spirits of just men made perfect," who had attained "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all."¹ In a wide sense of the word we may say that these were among those for whom prayer was made, but the prayer was less of supplication than commemoration. We noticed in the last chapter that the Western Church, towards the close of the thirteenth century, had come to the conclusion that the sin-stained but penitent souls were in a separate part of Hades called Purgatory, while the Eastern Church continued to think of such souls as in the same place as in impenitent. But, with this exception, the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth was agreed as to the doctrine of the condition of the departed, and her duty towards them.

No doubt there were many superstitious and erroneous ideas in the West connected with what is known as "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory." The doctrine of indulgences fostered these abuses, so that when the storm of

¹ Heb. xii. 22, 23.

Protestantism swept over England in the sixteenth century it was only too easy for the truth to be swept away with the falsehood. Instead of removing what was false and superstitious the Reformers protestantised the English Church and thus brought about a schism with the rest of the West. Once torn from unity, divisions multiplied. At the dawn of the Reformation the English nation was within the English Church. Now, in the twentieth century, half the nation is lost to the Church, and the Church itself is torn with the contradictory doctrines of hostile parties.

Protestantism, in varying degrees, denied any possibility of progress or purification after death, and therefore ceased to offer the Eucharist, to pray or to do good works for the welfare of the departed. The Protestant doctrine in its most crude form we have already quoted from the Homily *On Prayer*, which the Church of England once ordered to be read from all her pulpits and has never repudiated.

Acting on this doctrine the Reformers removed all Masses and prayers for the dead from the new *Book of Common Prayer* in 1552. A hundred years later, in the revision of 1662, the words familiar to us in the “Prayer for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here on earth” were

inserted, “ And we also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom.”¹ Some have interpreted these words as a prayer for the dead, but the fact remains that the words occur in a prayer distinctly entitled as one for the Church militant, and that the bulk of those who use the prayer have never so understood it, and the ordinary English churchman has no conception that the dead ought to be prayed for except by Roman Catholics. Until the words referred to in the Homily *On Prayer* are withdrawn it must be supposed that the Church of England in her official capacity leaves the faithful departed where the Primitive Church left the heathen who departed this life—to the chance prayers of those who happened to believe such intercessions were of use.

In spite of this official denial of the utility of

¹ In 1662, curiously enough, the burial collects were made more vague than they had been in 1552 and 1559. Until 1662 the words included, “That we, with this our *brother*, and all other departed . . . may have our perfect consummation,” etc. Still, even as the prayer stands in our present book, it is a prayer for the departed, though it has never taught our people to pray for the departed intentionally.

prayer for the dead there have always been some in the Church of England who lamented the work of the Reformers and privately offered the Eucharist and prayed for the departed. The Oxford Movement helped to restore the old faith and practice so that in the present day the custom of celebrating the Eucharist for the dead has been revived in multitudes of churches throughout the Anglican Communion, and the day must surely come when the Church in her official capacity will have to provide what is now left to the individual private judgment of her clergy and people.

The great European War has forced the sense of the loss of prayer for the dead not merely on numbers of Church people, but on very many who belong to the Nonconformist bodies. The Reformers denied any intermediate state or place between Heaven and Hell ; their descendants find little difficulty in the thought of a state of progress hereafter, and great difficulty in the belief that all but the pious "elect" are abandoned to an endless Hell.

It is, surely, the duty of all, who have the opportunity, to help in bringing England back to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church. The Reformers in theory desired to do this ; it is our part to see that their ambition shall event-

ually be gratified ! And how can we do this ?

i. We must individually accept the Catholic faith as to the " life of the world to come." And that faith is, briefly, this. (a) That the soul immediately after death is judged, according to the teaching of the apostle, " It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." ¹ This is called the " particular judgment," in which the soul appears alone before the Judge, and its essential condition is revealed. It will be in one of three spiritual conditions—perfectly holy ; penitent, but imperfect ; or else, impenitent and reprobate. Its " own place " is decided in this judgment. It will enter either Paradise or Hades, and in Hades it will be destined to abide either for ever, or for a time. As we are not concerned with the reprobate, we suppose the soul to be among the penitent but imperfect, and therefore to enter the unseen world of Hades for education and purification. This process is continued until the soul is cleansed from all stain of sin, and fit to appreciate the joys of Paradise, where it awaits the final judgment, and the end of time. The " general judgment " manifests and ratifies before all what was made known to each soul alone in the particular judgment. Thus is God justified in His works.

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

After the last judgment the soul enters what is called the state of glory. Thus the Faith teaches "that there is a purgatory" [or state of purification, whether one and the same as *infernus* or, as seems more probable, a separate place], and that the souls in this state are helped by the suffrages of the Church on earth, and especially by the sacrifice of the Eucharist. "It is a holy and good thought" to pray for the dead. Purgatory is "that second realm where the human spirit is purged and becomes worthy to ascend to Heaven."¹

It is probable that there is some suffering in this process of purification, for suffering is a condition of progress in this life, and the whole analogy of God's dealings with the soul as revealed in Holy Scripture, as well as the teaching and life of Christ, lead us to the conclusion that here or hereafter all must follow the steps of the Master, Who, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."² Certainly the mind of the whole Church is in favour of this conclusion, and we must ever bear in mind that it was the Church as a whole that

¹ "E canterò di quel secondo regno,
dove l'humano spirito si purga,
e di salire al ciel diventa degno."

—*Divina commedia*, Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto i.

² Heb. v. 8.

our Lord commissioned to go into all the world ¹ as the teacher sent by God to complete all that He "began both to do and teach." But we must also remember that this suffering is joyfully endured by those who are now being gladly conformed to the likeness of Christ. Even in this life suffering is not incompatible with joy. We are told that the Apostle Paul endured "as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing," and that he was able to say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."² How much more vividly must this be realized by the faithful departed !

2. Our faith will necessarily show itself in works. It was chiefly with reference to the unseen world that the Church inserted in the Creed the dogma as to "the communion of saints." This communion is that which exists between all the members of the Church, united in one body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The Church is in three states—militant on earth, expectant in Hades (Purgatory), triumphant in Heaven (Paradise). The members of the Church on earth communicate with each other in prayer, sacraments, and good works; with the faithful de-

¹ St. Matt. xxviii. 19; St. Mark xvi. 15.

² Rom. viii. 18.

parted by affectionate remembrance, by offering the holy sacrifice for them, by giving alms in their name, and with the intention of benefiting them as God may will, and by frequent prayer on their behalf. In return, the faithful departed intercede for those on earth, and more especially for those whose prayers chasten the time when they shall be freed from Hades and enter Paradise.

The faithful on earth have communion with the Blessed in Paradise by honouring them in various ways, asking their prayers, and in return receiving help from their intercession.

But as we are here concerned with the souls in Hades for purification and progress, we may suggest one or two practical ways in which we may realize "the communion of saints."

We should endeavour to have the Eucharist celebrated for our friends immediately after death, at the funeral, and as frequently afterwards as possible. This may be done by asking a priest to celebrate for this intention, or, if that is not possible, at least by being present when the Eucharist is celebrated and offering our communion and prayers with that intention. Each anniversary we shall keep in this way. Moreover we should from time to time do this for "all souls" departed, whether known to us or not.

In our daily prayers the departed should never be forgotten. Sometimes there is a difficulty as to what to ask for these souls. We may safely ask God to grant to them whatever we desire for their welfare—purification from all sin and all stain of sin, rest, peace, and an increase of joy and the light of God's presence, and a speedy entrance into Paradise.

It would be a great mistake to neglect prayer for the dead because we know so little of their needs. God does not depend on our statements for His knowledge as we necessarily depend on what we hear of the necessities of those at a distance. It is quite enough to pray with the *intention* of helping those we pray for, without always specifying the exact benefit we seek. Thus we may say a psalm or the Lord's Prayer for the soul of one departed, bearing him in mind as we pray. God knows how to translate our intention into the grace that the soul most needs. After all "prayer is the soul's sincere *desire*, uttered or unexpressed," and our words are rather the expression of the desire than a statement of what it is exactly that we desire. Our Lord said, "When you pray say 'Our Father,'" etc., and we may say this and other prayers, such as the *Ave Maria*, for any intention we desire. However, in the "Appendix" are given a few

prayers for the departed from those in use both in the Christian Church and in non-Christian religions, as examples of what we may ask.

There are numerous other works that may be done with the intention of offering the work for the souls of the dead, leaving it entirely to the wisdom of God as to how He answers our wish. Alms, given in support of hospitals, are among the more obviously useful good works that can be made into intercession if done with that intention. Or the beauty of a church may be increased by endowment of a lamp to burn continually before an altar with the intention that it shall represent before God our ceaseless desire to help some soul or "all souls," or those we are especially at the time anxious to help, such as our soldiers fallen in battle. Some such prayer may be inscribed on the lamp.

We must work and pray for the restoration of the "Day of the Dead"—All Souls' Day (Nov. 2)—which was removed from our calendar when the false doctrine we have quoted from the Homily made any prayer for the dead superfluous, by asserting that after this life there were but two places, Heaven and Hell, and prayer could be of no use to the souls in either state. Hence the Reformers kept the Feast of All Saints to commemorate the souls in Heaven, and abolished

All Souls which had been a day of prayer for those in Hades.

In concluding our plea for a return to the faith and practice of the Church before the schism of the East and West, it may be well to dispose of an objection sometimes raised by ill-instructed controversialists. It is objected that this faith and practice is identical with that condemned in the twenty-second of the "Articles of Religion" to which the clergy of the Established Church of England give a general assent. The objection would only be valid if there were but one doctrine concerning Purgatory, and that one "the Romish." It is very necessary to distinguish between a belief in a future process of purification and spiritual growth—a belief held in the Eastern Church by multitudes of Protestants of all denominations, and by very many Anglicans—and "*the Romish doctrine concerning*" this process. The distinction is easy to see. It is, for example, quite possible to believe that "there is a Paradise, or Heaven," and yet to hold that the pagan doctrine of Greek and Roman mythology concerning Paradise or Heaven is "a fond thing, vainly invented," etc.

The Romish doctrine was partly reformed at Trent, and condemned, and in so far as any of it remains it is mainly connected with making a

distinction between the state of purification and the Hell of the lost as we have already said, and with the doctrine that the object of Purgatory is not so much to cleanse the soul as to exact from the soul a quantitative suffering in payment of a debt due to God which can only be so liquidated. Nothing we have advocated, except possibly the belief that the penitent are not with the reprobate, is in any way associated with a doctrine that is peculiar to the Roman Church. We have certainly denounced the heretical statement in the Homily, but no one is committed to more than the general acknowledgment that the homilies as a whole "contain a godly and wholesome doctrine," which is true, but they contain much that is erroneous as well.

We prefer the doctrine of Holy Scripture and of the Primitive Church, and agree with St. Augustine when he says : " In the book of the Maccabees we read of sacrifice offered for the dead. Howbeit, even if it were nowhere at all read in the old Scriptures, not small is the authority, which in this usage is clear, of the whole Church, namely, that in the prayers of the priest which are offered to the Lord God at the altar, the commendation of the dead hath also its place. . . . If we cared not for the dead, we should not, as we do, supplicate God on their behalf."

APPENDIX

Prayers from Christian Liturgies and Non-Christian Sources

PRAYERS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

ST. PAUL

“The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.”—2 Tim. i. 18.

LITURGY OF ST. MARK

The Diptychs of the Departed being read, the Priest prays:—

“And to the spirits of all these give rest, our Master, Lord, and God, in the tabernacles of Thy saints, vouchsafing to them in Thy kingdom the good things of Thy promise, which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and it hath not entered into the heart of man, the things which Thou hast prepared, O God, for them that love Thy holy name. Grant rest to their souls and vouchsafe to them the kingdom of Heaven.”

ARMENIAN

Remember, O Lord, and be propitious to the souls of the departed, and give them repose and life, and set them with Thy saints in the kingdom of Heaven, making them worthy of Thy mercy.

SAINT IGNATIUS (*Syro-Jacobite*)

Peacefully and tranquilly receive through Thy goodness, O Lord, the souls and spirits of Thy worshippers, who have departed to Thee out of the present life; but chiefly them for whom, and on account of whom, this sacrifice is offered and perfected. Remember them, grant them rest, and place them in the habitations of light, in the abodes of blessed spirits, in the heavenly Jerusalem, in the Church of the firstborn who are written in Heaven: and bestowing on them good memory and a most happy rest, through Thy love to men, give them the life that knoweth not old age, the good things that pass not away, the delights that have no end. Mercy may they obtain through Thy clemency: rest may they be possessed of through Thy mercy: let them be hid under the wings of Thy grace and not condemned, because they have put their trust in Thee and Thine Only-Begotten Son, through Whom we also hope to obtain mercy for ourselves and for them.

Grant, O Lord, rest to their souls whom we commemorate, and write their names in the book of life, and make them worthy of the pleasure which is received in Paradise. Set them in the region of the just, and join them to the ranks of the pious, and cause them to arrive in the harbour of life, where is

the habitation of rest, where griefs, infirmities, groans and miseries fly ; where all the saints enjoy blessedness, where all the pious rest. Cast out none of them, or of us, in condemnation from Thy heavenly kingdom ; for One only hath appeared upon earth without sin, our Lord Jesus Christ.

FROM THE ROMAN LITURGY (*Sarum Missal*)

(I)

Remember also, O Lord, the souls of Thy servants and handmaidens N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace ; to them, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, we pray that Thou wouldest grant a place of refreshment, light and peace, Through the same Christ our Lord.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND (*pre-Reformation Sarum*)

O God, Whose property is always to have mercy and to forgive, we humbly beseech Thee on behalf of the soul of Thy servant N. which Thou hast (this day) commanded to pass out of this world ; that Thou wouldest not deliver it into the hand of the enemy, nor forget it at the last, but that Thou wouldest command it to be received by Thy holy angels, and to be carried to the land of the living ; and because he (she) hoped and believed in Thee, let him (her) be accounted worthy to rejoice in the communion of Thy saints. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(2)

O Lord Jesu Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the hand of Hell, and from the deep pit ; deliver them from the lion's mouth, lest Hell swallow them up, lest they fall into the blackness of darkness ; but let St. Michael, the standard-bearer, bring them into the holy light which Thou promisedst to Abraham and to his seed of old.

O God, Whose property is always to have mercy and to forgive, be favourable unto the soul of Thy servant N. and forgive all his sins, that being loosed from the bonds of death he may be counted worthy to pass into life. Through, etc.

(3)

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thou wouldest cause the soul of Thy servant N. to be received by the angels of light, and carried to the habitations prepared for the blessed. Through, etc.

(4)

On Anniversaries—at the Eucharist

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the soul of Thy servant N. the year's mind of whose burial we are keeping, may be cleansed by this sacrifice, and may obtain alike pardon and everlasting rest. Through, etc.

(5)

For a Father and Mother

O God, Who hast bidden us honour our father and mother, of Thy mercy have compassion upon the souls of my parents, and forgive their sins, and make me to live with them in the joy of eternal life. Through, etc.

(6)

For any one deceased

O Lord, Who alone canst heal after death, grant, we beseech Thee, that the soul of Thy servant N. may be cleansed from all sin, and may be gathered into the company of Thy elect. Through, etc.

(7)

For a Friend

Help us, O God of our salvation, and, entreated by the prayers of the blessed mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, place the soul of Thy servant in the blessedness of everlasting light. Through, etc.

(8)

For All Souls

O God, the Creator and the Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of all them that have departed this life the remission of all their sins, that by our devout supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired. Through, etc.

“ GUILD OF ALL SOULS ”*For the Dying*

O Almighty and everliving God, the Preserver of Souls, Who dost chasten those whom Thou lovest and dost correct every son whom Thou receivest ; we implore Thee to look mercifully upon (.....) and all those who are now in their last agony and who are at the point of death. May they be presented before Thee, by the hands of Thy holy angels, and admitted to the fellowship of Thy saints and elect, so that no defilement of the flesh may hurt them ; but let Thy pity and compassion absolve them from all their offences, through Jesus Christ our LORD. Amen.

For the Departed

O Lord, the GOD of spirits and of all flesh, Who didst put death under Thy feet, didst destroy the power of the Devil and gavest Thy Life for the world, grant rest, O LORD, to the souls of Thy departed servants (especially.....), in the place of light and refreshment, whence pain and sorrow and sighing are driven away, and in Thy goodness and mercy pardon every sin committed by them in thought, word, and deed ; Thou Who art the Resurrection and the Life, and Who livest and reignest, God, for ever. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who hast promised to come again in like manner as Thou didst go into Heaven ; we pray Thee to hasten the time of Thine Advent, that sin and death may be overcome, and that we, with all Thy faithful departed, may be perfected

in blessedness in that day when Thou makest up Thy jewels ; through Thy mercy, O our God, Who art blessed and livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

For any one deceased

O Lord, grant rest to the soul of Thy servant, keeping it unto that blessed life which is with Thee in Thine own rest, where all Thy saints repose.

COMMEMORATION

Commemorating our all-holy, spotless, most highly blessed and glorious Lady the Mother of God, and ever-Virgin Mary, with all saints, let us commend ourselves, and each other, and all our life to Christ our Lord.

FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

(This prayer from "The Visitation of the Sick" may be used for one departed as well as for the purpose for which it is given—"for a sick person at the point of death.")

O Almighty God, with Whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons : we humbly commend the soul of Thy servant our dear....., into Thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour ; most humbly beseeching Thee, that it may be precious in Thy sight. Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb,

that was slain to take away the sins of the world ; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before Thee. Through, etc.

The Psalm cxxx., *De profundis* is very commonly said for the faithful departed. At the end, instead of the *Gloria Patri*, the following is said :—

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And may light perpetual shine upon them.

Then a collect, and in conclusion, “ May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.” Amen.

FROM NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

ISLAM (*Salatu-l-janazah*)

The service for one departed takes place usually in a mosque, or some open place near the graveyard. The prayer is divided into four “ takbir.”

Before the prayer some one calls out : “ Here begins prayer for the dead.” The Imam recites the intention : “ I purpose to offer prayers to God for this dead person, consisting of four tabkirs.” He says the first takbir !

“ God is most great ! Holiness to Thee, O God, and to Thee be praise. Great is Thy name. Great is Thy dignity. Great is Thy praise. There is no God but Thee.” Then follow other prayers, and in the third takbir the following is said : “ O God, forgive our living and our dead, and those who are present, and those who are absent, and our children

and our full-grown persons, our men and our women. O God, those whom Thou dost keep alive amongst us, keep alive in Islam, and those whom Thou dost cause to die, let them die in the faith."

The people then seat themselves on the ground and raise their hands in silent prayer in behalf of the deceased's soul, and, afterwards, addressing the relatives, they say, "It is the will of God." To which the chief mourner replies, "I am pleased with the will of God." According to the teaching of Mohammed it is the duty of all true Moslems to pray for the dead.

The following is a type of inscription on a Moslem grave.

The tomb of the deceased and pardoned,
The Reverend Nasr ed-Din Effendi,
in need of the mercy of God,

THE COMPASSIONATE.

Recite the *Fâtihâ*
for his soul.¹

As the *Fâtihâ* is the equivalent in Islam to our *Pater noster*, and is recited for every need whether of the living or the dead, and many times daily in the five times of prayer, we may quote it.

THE FÂTIHÂ

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE
MERCIFUL.

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds !
The Compassionate, the Merciful !

¹ From *The City of Dancing Dervishes*, H. C. Lukach, and Hughes' *Dict. of Islam*.

King on the Day of Judgment !
 Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.
 Guide Thou us on the straight path,
 The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious ;
 with whom Thou art not angry and who go not astray.
 —*Qur'an*, sura i.

The Prophet passed by graves in al-Madînah and said, “ Peace be to you, O inhabitants of the graves : may God forgive us and you. Ye have passed on before us, and we are following you.”

JUDAISM

The orthodox Jews, as we have seen, have always prayed for the dead. The prayer known as the “ kaddish ” is commonly considered to be effectual in releasing the soul from punishment after death. The son, or next of kin, is to say the kaddish for eleven months after the death of a relation.

The following is a prayer said at the house of mourners : “ May our reading of the Law and our prayer be acceptable before Thee for the soul of N. Deal with it according to Thy great mercy, opening to it the gates of compassion and mercy, and the gates of the Garden of Eden, and receive it in love and favour ; and Thy holy angels to conduct it and give it rest beneath the tree of life.”¹

¹ *Meditation of Isaac*, pp. 336-7.

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